



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

WIDENER



HN MYLJ U

7344C.38.12

HARVARD COLLEGE  
LIBRARY



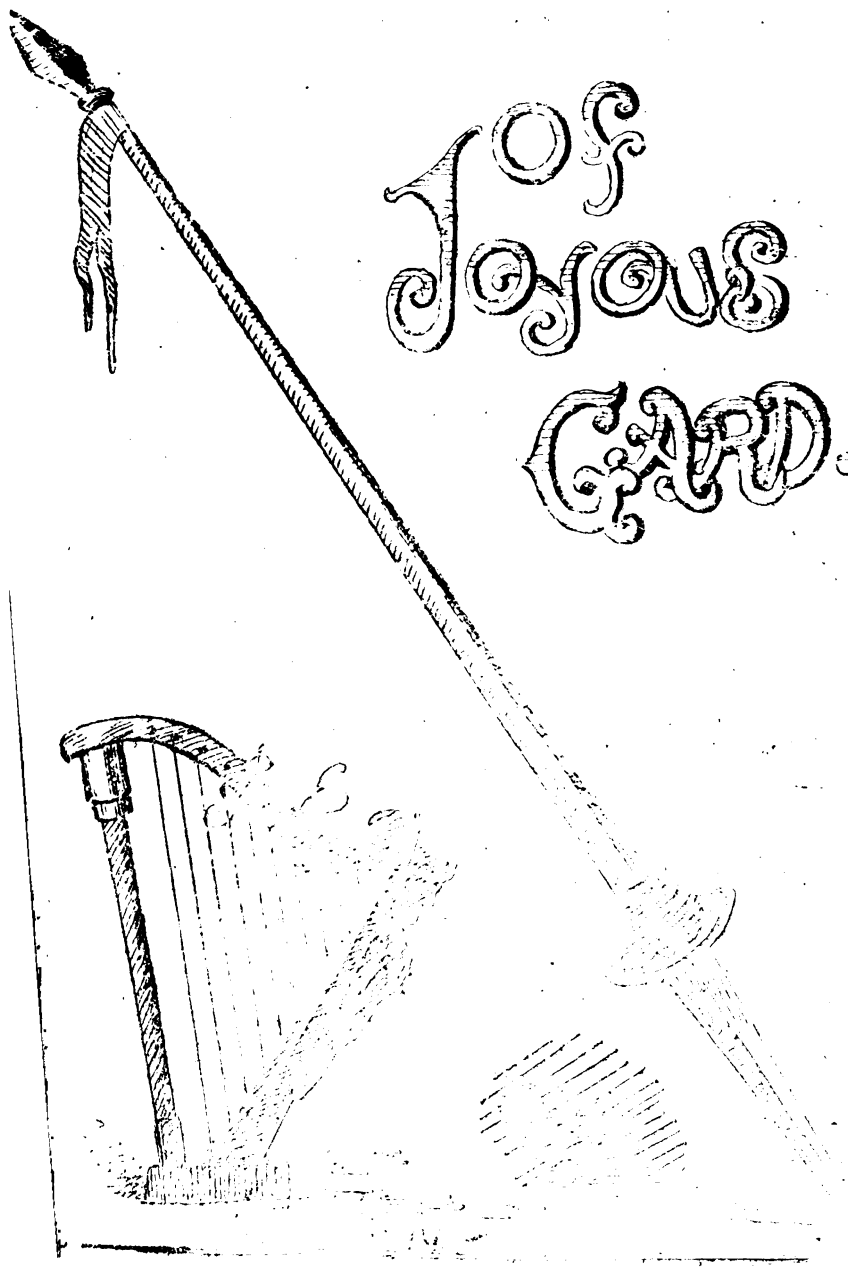
THE BEQUEST OF  
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL  
CLASS OF 1882  
OF NEW YORK

1918





10  
of  
Joyous  
CARD.



11

1/1 Alex Ireland Esq<sup>r</sup>

With the warmest regards  
of the Author





OF  
JOYOUS GARD

BY  
ÆLIAN PRINCE

LONDON  
E. W. ALLEN  
4, AVE MARIA LANE, E.C.  
1890

2,3446.33.12

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY  
FROM  
THE BEQUEST OF  
EVENT JANSEN WENDELL  
1916

Carr, Frank

---

IN the Volume OF PALOMIDE, the author has chosen Bamborough Castle, Northumberland, as the best authenticated site of the Keep of Joyous Gard and the country up to the Cheviots as its Province. To this he has adhered in the following pages.

Upon the arrival in Logris, from Cornwall, of La Belle Isonde and Sir Tristram (after King Mark's flight to France) they were led to Joyous Gard by Sir Launcelot of the Lake, and the present portion of Arthurian story opens with the return of La Belle Isonde, Sir Tristram and Palomide, after the jousts of Lonazep.

---



## OF JOYOUS GARD.

---

### PROEM.

---

NAMED of a star, sweet Esther ! take thy seat,  
There, as last eve, beneath these showers of gold,  
Laburnum's bloom, and, midst thy vernal court,  
Command conclusion of the knightly tale.  
The spear-thrust, and the sword-light, and the storm  
Of onset—dash, and clang of arms, and death,  
Known in our song. But, patience, gentles, all.  
Sweet gentles of our grove, keep patience still !  
For scenes of gentle joyaunce shall beguile,  
When entered Joyous Gard, once clothed with hues  
As of a dream of poësy—a dream  
Of peaceful beauteousness—and listening leave  
Mistrust and cares to colder minds, or learn  
Your own in other hearts, the tread of fate

Sounding through lives divine ; for these, of truth,  
Are notes preluding, all too sadly near,  
The swan-song of the Table Round.

Rejoice !

In all your patience, entering Joyous Gard.  
Rejoice ! The blissful hours—midst those of gloom  
And mingled miseries, few as we know  
And disproportioned to the events of life—  
Rejoice ! when known their kindred anywhere ;  
But now, sequestrate in lone Joyous Gard,  
Rejoice, more largely.—Yes, I now begin.—  
Yet, in our story, judging from yourselves  
Of any weakness, on it be bestowed  
Approval from the soul of charity ;  
Forgiving, purifying, with intent  
To yield the myrrh and frankincense where due,  
With happier circumstance of light. Rejoice !  
In patience, gentles, ere song claims the tear.

## I.

PROUD Lonazep's high feast-days following tourney,

Its royal week fulfilled, and Joyous Gard  
Found of Sir Tristram and Isonde, with them  
Associate, curious each to learn the Gard's  
Dominions,—Ector, Gareth, Bleoberis,  
Dinadin—mirthful Censor of the Ring ;  
And he, King Arthur's friend, war-proof ; and he,  
Sir Gareth, fresh from glory of his quest  
For skittish, brown Lynnette ; with Ector fair  
Of fancy, face, and soul, his clear device  
One star of gold, with words, "For Happiness,  
One star is all we need : " and in their rear,  
Ever rode Palomide, unasked, unlured,  
But captive of Sir Tristram's kindness, felt  
The Gard could not reject him.



Pity, give;

Great pity, yield we, errant Palomide,  
Woe-worn and unregenerate knight, distraught  
By love, enmeshed in wiles :—Ah, yet, no more  
Distraught than shields which bore the Rood, as  
    knew,  
Crossed, chastened, haggard in Tintagel times,  
The Lion-knight himself.

Brave, ringing days  
Of chase and disport, as their knightly wits  
Could best in lusty idleness devise,  
Disordered keep, dominions, town—and then,  
Sweet quietude. Which, said of Joyous Gard,  
Sir Launcelot's fair possession, given this while  
To these our lovers flown from Cornwall's lands,  
Is to name quietude unknown to haunt  
By river set, or midst the heathy hills,

Or valley green where blooms the asphodel,  
Now that those fiery spirits, warrior-guests,  
Withdrawn to Camelot.

Nay, only four.

The Knight of Odin here remains, unasked  
And unbeguild, except through Love's own guile  
Through which we all are self-beguild, and caught,  
Or, confident in Tristram's kindly heart.  
Forsooth, of kindest heart, Belle Isonde's peer;  
For when she chode the pagan for his shame—  
That stain of honour, done at Lonazep—  
Tristram so loveably forgave all wrong  
Done or designed, his Queen declined her head,  
Nor answered. "Hardest matters," said he, "these  
To lovers, since fidelity belongs  
But to the angels unfallen. We hold but this,  
Our chivalry imbound by faith in Christ,

Contrition cancels sin ! " Indeed, no knight  
Sorrowed more greatly, in a hapless love  
More grievously enthralled, more madly toiled ;  
None, in such utter ghastliness of soul  
Through fell remorse, as he their guest. And, now,  
When come the morrow he must leave the bounds  
Of Joyous Gard, delirious partings ne'er  
Shook the soul's temple, as with Palomide.  
For, now, in silence on the sea he looks,  
With inquisition of each several isle :  
And, now, with moans half-stilled, he eyes the land  
As questing for the rills and mossy ways  
Known of their later roamings, fixed at length  
Far up those shadowy mountain-heights, whereby  
Lay mystic Zeemerwater, which bestowed  
Last eve's delights : and, now, his lady's hand  
He kissed, and wetted with his bright, warm tears :  
And, now, it was Sir Tristram he embraced

With thick heart-throbs his corslet might not hide.  
Thus parted he, for once and aye. Nay, noon  
Finds him returning—next morn, he would go.  
Morn waited for the noon, noon for its eve,  
Eve, spring of day. Tarrying, he vowed to part,—  
Departing, rode a circle of green lanes  
Which led him back : noon's greeting came as sure  
As "farewell" at the dawn : he vowed, re-vowed,  
Promised, undid, as wont of love debarred.  
It was great joy to stay. "My heart doth sing :"  
Said he, new-vowed, departure new-postponed,  
"Sings sweet as saga in a marriage room :"  
Yet was there deadliest dolour in his joy.

Thus wayward weeks passed by, till none gave heed  
His meek inconstancy ; all, heedless seemed,  
Considerate of his travail. But, within,  
Were ceaseless fightings, and the mastery lay

With grief, whereby his soul grew sere, his frame  
Despoiled of manhood's graces. Thus, to go  
Worked torment, and to stay none less, as known  
When in a silver-bright, brake-girdled spring,  
His startled eyes beheld a countenance  
Wasted and wan—the former Palomide  
Had vanished. Hereupon, with wailing tone  
He sang his ruthful pains to this sad worst.  
His plainings hovered over Isonde's name,  
As autumn's bee above the heather bloom.  
The heart she brake, pronounced her virtues, grace,  
Beauty, compassion. Loving-kind, was she  
Who so forbore the presence of this worn,  
Gaunt, tearful, smileless pagan. Hard thereby,  
Sir Tristram riding near the river's marge,  
Seeking fresh sport, across the brake was ware  
This weeping song : drew near : and angered learnt  
The purport of those sorrowings by the spring.

Impetuously he burst the thicket-screen,  
Laid hands of fury on their guest, with words  
Fierce as the stroke of swords ; whereon, he gat  
Answer as Love can give, when speak it must,  
Although such speech be death. "Fair Knight, I shall  
Acquit me in the way ye least desire.  
La Belle Isonde, once wife of Mark, and Queen  
Of Cornwall, nor long since : divorced from Mark  
May be, by law, by spiritual powers, but ne'er  
Divorced from Love's respect. By grace of Love,  
That star of Erin's royal maidenhood  
Shines ever golden in my Knighthood's heart,  
Which she makes Joyous Gard for me. I love  
La Belle Isonde ! I love her, as ye wit,  
Above all other ladies of the world ;  
Love her, though it befall me through such love—  
That hap of many knights—to die for her.  
Yet her sweet grace, well is it worth my life,

Since it hath been best life in life to me.  
Isonde, the fountain, centre, hope, and rest  
Of all my worship, as best life in life  
May claim my life. Without her, I had been  
The simplest squire that ever strove for spurs;  
But she in my remembrance—well, ye know  
The frequent times my spear hath given her name  
To victory—chief, in those heroic lists  
Of Lonazep's first day, when never knight  
Withstood my onset.

“ Have respect of one  
Whose manhood's years, as by a snap of frost  
Smitten, decline—through love. I lack no faith.  
Hope may, resurgent, bring fresh hours of green ;  
St. Brita's summer in my heart may bring  
Season more precious than the month of rose.  
But wrinkles of despondency, now mine.

No bounty have I had, naught of reward  
From Belle Isonde : nor have I in these days.  
No treason lies in this my love, ye wit,  
Since love is free to all. First known, last know—  
Your lady I have loved : do love : whereby,  
She is my lady, even as she is thine.  
Then, have I not, my brother, wrong of you ?  
For you rejoice her : such grace never mine,  
Nor never like to be. Yet neither scorn,  
Nor weariness, nor waters, wastes, nor time  
Remove me from La Belle Isonde. My fate  
To love her—love her to the uttermost,  
And to my end of days, as well as ye."

But Palomide departed, gave no gain ;  
Nay, took the gain of pleasure in the land  
From Tristram's mind. Unconquered soul of love,  
A glory in his ruin, Palomide,



Was errant, faithful in that enterprise,  
Keen-questing after wrong ; whilst, Tristram here,  
Love-bound from Honour's strife.

Then, marvel none,  
War's passion warm, though languid in his blood,  
Rebelled, when now the spring gave birth to hopes,  
Desires, love-fancies, as it haps the man,  
Or, woman's leaning. In Sir Tristram's arm,  
Tumultuous yearnings,—none to be assuaged  
But by the blood of evil, riotous then  
Within some vineyard, where God's righteous rule  
Late thriving. Thus, the gloomed Knight has no ear  
For Isonde's pretty heart-conceits : apart,  
Walks restless—no regard in eye or speech.  
Leading to haunts, endeared by times of mirth,  
She hoped some scene, some incident, perchance,  
Or impulse, might the pains of phantasy

Hasten to utterance, and, that travail past,  
She could dispute the birthright of his thought.

Vainly. In shade, or sun, or bower, still gloomed  
His temper in the shadows of evil cast  
From southern homes. Then Isonde, grown heart-  
strong

For such event—one eve, with merriest voice  
She blithely, brightly, swiftly sped. O, she,  
Now empress of herself—hard thing to do,  
Made gay of “Go, my Love!” and sped him forth.  
“You must begone, sweet lord. No tarrying, Haste!  
Thy purpose as the night—calm, clear—fulfilled;  
Then, haste thee back. These shining, peopled heavens  
Wait on thy quest. Ah, me, but one lone star  
Is mine. But that one star, Love’s very own,  
Ascending now. Note it each eve, my soul!  
Not tarrying here: no tarrying, whilst farewell

Sits sorrowing waiting welcome—not until  
That star of Hesper on the edge of morn  
Change nature with departure. Faithful heart!  
Faithful, unto that token come again.”  
“ Heart of my heart ! ” he answered, “ Now, I know  
All conquest is for thee. My Honour’s theme,  
Art thou ; and in my apprehension, single,  
Pure and chivalrous, Isonde’s love, my quest—  
However named that be, in challenged fields,  
Or gossip of the halls.”

Straightway he left.

When day called from the deep, his silver arms  
Glistened upon the hill remote which slopes  
To Logris. In these arms, by Belle Isonde  
Arrayed, in memory of the olden times  
Of Erin, he subdued by marsh and weald,  
In murderous ways and forests, beasts and men

Monstrous in kind : within the homely dales  
Gave counsel from the Holy Word : gave boon  
Of song which sweetened toils and death : abroad,  
Spread law for highroad and the household : those  
Known of the Table Round, he helped in need  
Spear-stricken of the pagans—e'er, for those  
Changed darkened fortunes into bright—then, turned  
Towards Joyous Gard, star-timed, to seek her bowers.

Here saddens Isonde for her absent Knight :  
Yet, hither, wends the Knight of Love, the Light  
Of Honour ; he whose lone lamenting harp  
Companion of her love whene'er her mood  
Is loneliest. Now, in this her loneliness  
Awaiting—fluttering, sweet, strange, varying notes  
Glide through the strings, as kindling to the breeze,  
Whereon, she hums the ballad—" O, he comes,  
He comes ! His step is near." He, over hill,

By scaur, thick woods, by ford and valley, rides  
Carolling to his armour's clink that strain  
Of Golden-tongued Lolod, the roundelay  
Sung at high feast in Carduel's lily halls  
Ever at Pentecost, of early wars  
When Arthur won his empire. Now, he reached  
The ragged coast, approached the glittering hold,  
Yet knew not of its place ; so bright the force  
Of day-dream to obscure the natural sight.  
Sharp turning on the pebbly frith, a way  
Well known, his steed awoke him—he beheld  
That massy growth of rocks, their breadths of wall,  
Their unassailable, resplendent towers,—  
“ O, magical, O, blessed Gard,” he cried :  
“ The beauteous marvel of an evil world ! ”  
Then was his heart ensnared by other thoughts.  
Along the secret sea-path wending,—lo,  
The white flower at yon lofty lattice waves ;

Waves wildly in the higher breeze. No flower,  
No flower ! The kerchief of La Belle Isonde  
Shines welcome. Well he knows it : lifts his helm :  
And, now, the cavern-portals of the Gard  
Receive him, welcome.

Often thus it happed.

When felt the fang of hunger for the war :  
Whene'er his spirit heard dark places call,  
Cheerily for the south he brake away ;  
Varying in venture of his chivalry,  
He failed not, leaving songs of gospel-peace  
Which held in roughest homes the hearts for truth  
And loving-kindness in melodious leash—  
And cheerily came back. For him, delight  
In search, in trial, and return—return,  
Advised within the music of the harp.

When seen by him the curtseying branches, heard  
Approaching welcomes faring on the breeze  
From children's voices, instruments between,  
And notes above the gleemen's sylvan tones  
Resounding from proud martial tongues, for him  
Then finest joy. And yet, 'twere hard to say,  
Which dearest—wounding or the healing—which,  
The passionate rapture of the assailing spear,  
Or Joyous Gard's affectionate repose.

\* \* \* \* \*

O Joyous Gard ! once more thy flowery lands  
Are ours : and would that we could linger here,  
Now here returned. Fair Keep of Joyous Gard !  
Thy battlements as built of gems and gold  
Sparkling, with double joy we hail, returned.

## II.

PATIENCE, each gentle of our grove, for here  
Be scenes of gentle joyaunce. Gentles, more !  
Give the heart's rarest sweetness to a tale,  
Too near that full-voiced strain, which must be sung,  
The last of glory for the Sacred Ring.  
Hither, shall hide another royal love,  
But with beleaguering hosts : and with the hosts  
Consuming suffering ; so, the cordial Keep  
Be Dolorous Gard, again. Revolt on ruin,  
Roaring, with storms of fire, and sword, and blood,  
Follow from here to Camlan's tristful field.

But, now, Isonde, and Tristram, in this Keep,—  
Mysterious in its beauty and dark powers,



A dazzling glory, and a hold of might,  
This Joyous Gard, queen of the northern seas,  
Girdled by emerald waters, clear and calm,  
With realm of golden isles, and liberties  
Inland, far-stretching to safe-guarding hills—  
Herein, our lovers,—blissful terms are theirs.  
The distant reefs, with flying clouds of foam  
Radiant at day-dawn, are unknown of eyes  
Emparadised, where softer fragrance falls,  
And fairer lights illumine than at this prime,  
So deep, so sweet, so long its slumber won  
From yester-joys : and noon-tide hath its groves,  
Its woodlands, sought when morning's sylvan sports  
Close with the ardent hours : cool, silver eve,  
Delight dwells in her name, and lovers love  
Her silence and her sweetness—O, then, here  
Fivefold delight environs this meek time :  
And night—the azure and the passionate night—

Hath stars, which gaze to learn if lovers hold  
The ecstasies ordained—all of Isonde  
And Tristram found, with raptures duly told,  
As on the glowing rosary of love,  
When came the sacred night. O, Gard ! apart  
The mischief-making, mischief-shaken world,  
The brattling, sore, heart-breaking world : O, Gard !  
O, Joyous Gard ! sequestered shrine of love :  
Thou flowery guerdon for a knightly life ;  
O, Joyous Gard ! love and the valiant heart  
Are thine : O, love, sequestrate in thy bowers  
Well knows its valiance !—Might this last their lives,  
Life far too brief, with gift of patriarch years  
And all life's fires enkindled.

Yet, ere long,  
Sir Tristram yearned to largely breathe again  
Sharp air inspiriting of knightlihood,

And back he fared. The wildness of farewell,  
Which whelmed Isonde, and left her as a corse  
Whose resurrection bided his return,  
Presaged strange doom : but, conscience in his spear,  
Christ in his heart, and strenuous in his hope  
To find where fraudulent, violent evil raged,  
Or hid in ambush off the royal roads,  
Repress it, cleanse the dens and shades, make straight  
The ways of righteous law, establish peace—  
Right forth he fared.

But when the moon made good  
The circle of her radiance, Joyous Gard  
Was ware a knight had crossed the sea-way crowned  
With field-flowers, with his brand ensheathed in green,  
Its hilt enlaced with briony, his lance  
Wreathed with ambrosial leaves and topaz blooms.  
To Belle Isonde, quick questioning, his reply,

Gentle, melodious as a river-fall  
At time of evensong, thus to her heart.  
“Thy Tristram went to conquer : he returns  
The conquered one. Of Joyous Gard, no coast  
But he hath ranged, and longer as he ranged  
More fast-bound he. Isonde ! all thou shalt know.  
This must be Love's inheritance, its first  
And fairest, or, may be, its holiest, last,  
Secured retreat : which shall be known of us  
By hill and stream, forests and lawns, or hid,  
In yonder glittering isles : and, still more fair,  
The pious innocence of those who breathe  
Beneath our skies,—but thou shalt know, my Love !  
Know every whit.” Then, Isonde took these robes  
Of azure blue, worn when his magic harp  
Allured the princess to his couch of pain ;  
That argent drapery, he,—which once attired  
His knightliness within her father's halls—

But bade his squire remain to cleanse his arms,  
Dew-stained on his late journeys. Isonde, then,  
With wondering accents, "I shall forth with thee.  
Ask not, I go. Forbid, yet go I will,  
For thou hast said. But this uncertain quest  
Requires thy spear: quick dangers lurk in smiles;  
Worst hurts are hidden near the quiet way."—  
"My spear shall rest amongst its leaves and  
flowers.

The trust begotten shall not fail in me."  
But Isonde, spirit-darkened, as her lord  
Bewrayed by sorcery worse than that which won  
Dishonoured doom amidst Armida's groves,  
Wept long. Last, born in brightness from her tears,  
One thought, and, spirit-lightened — "Then, thy  
harp!

Than its dominion, none of lance or sword  
So absolute." He answered. "And my harp

Shall sing within thy casement to the wind—  
Tuneful, apprising dwellers here, how we  
Amidst our pleasant pathways fare.—My harp!  
The goodness dwelling in the evilest soul  
Oft gave thee worship, when we two alone  
Fought fiery dangers. In her casement rest,  
Who best hath loved thee ; while with her I search  
Where goodness of the good and evilest soul  
Lives permanent—as yonder mountain peaks  
Enduring clouds and vapours, rains and snow,  
Yea, storms of thunder, yet abide the same,  
Glorious in intercourse with sun and stars,  
Unswerving in their purple blooms what time  
The harvest-songs arise—faithful and fair,  
Beyond the reach of wrath and tears.—But forth,  
And know it of thyself, my soul ! There wait  
More marvels than of Zeemerwater's lake  
Throughout our progress.”

As they roved by thorp,  
Field, glade, or forest, folk beheld in them  
Angels of day, of England's sweetest heaven,  
Calm blue and clouds of silver. Everywhere,  
Surprised they found expectant faces greet them.  
Before the welcome, voices bade them tarry.  
And they were no man's charge. Each hamlet's heart,  
A central lodge, which in the nearer spring  
Greened round with shrubs, within the summer time  
Glowing with rose, and named the Stranger's Home,  
Stood ready on their ways. This was, in sooth,  
The high court of each village : only here,  
Plain varlets of the cot gave note of sense  
Of beauteous luxury. The golden ewer  
With milk fresh brought : the consecrated loaves  
On jewelled dish ; the varied, rich repast,  
Were instant, without question of their faith,  
Their people, or intent. Thus, on their paths,

With sunset this wayfarer's harbourage  
Failed never, nor its hospitalities ;  
And often musical in welcome joy  
Its bowers—with rushes green already strewn—  
Later, for needful rest to be o'erlaid  
With satin as of primrose gold. Even thus,  
Or as they rode, or tarried, nights and days,  
All prospered.

It was on their earliest rest,  
Our Knight, alone, soft-pacing near a lea,  
Beheld a hind, and strong within him rose  
Fresh cravings for the hunt. Waiting a spear,  
He gazed, and deemed the creature beautiful  
Above all creatures he had seen. It shone  
White as the spurning of the sea ; her neck  
A chaplet circled, woven of blooms and leaves  
And beaded jewels : and the chaplet-blooms



Faded and flowered—renewed again, they fell,  
Reviving brighter, and her jewels gleamed  
With driving splendours. When his lance was brought  
He marked the varlet gave it with a smile—  
He knew not which—of scorn or doubtfulness ;  
Therefore, he laid it down, and towards the hind  
Stole with a fowler's step ; the grazing hind  
Nor nearer seemed for his approach ; he ran,  
The hind leaped gently as to seek its herd—  
No further, and no nearer, was the hind,  
For Tristram's fleetness or its gentle pace.  
The swiftest horse was called : she patient cropped  
The closest knot of grass ; the Lion-knight  
Used the spur hotly,—she with sportive speed  
Sprang as to reach her layer : in fleet pursuit,  
Amazed, the rider followed—last, a chasm  
Received the hind, nor was she seen again.  
When told his tale next day with pictured phrase

For village wonder, good folk shook the head,  
“ Ah, that sweet hind is EARTH’S FELICITY.  
When sought she flies, and comes when undesired.”  
Nor Tristram well had ended, ere the hind  
Drew near most suddenly. She laid her head  
Close on his bosom, and the chaplet’s leaves  
Murmuring threw odours o’er his countenance,  
And on it, from the jewels all the lights  
Seen ever shrined in gems, a dazzling gleam,  
So he an angel seemed. Then, Tristram felt  
A painful rapture of strange joyfulness,  
And lifted hand to stroke the hind in joy,  
When it withdrew : and as he rose, the hind  
Entered a thicket : so was lost : and folk  
Turned from Sir Tristram : shook their heads  
again,  
Mournfully whispering : “ Thus it ever is  
With EARTH’S FELICITY ! ”

## The roving pair

Dwelt as within appointed residence  
Where'er their place, nor ever failed the view  
Of social weal, and faith wherein reposed  
The land's habitual peace.

## The kindly soul

Of these dominions held the dues of life  
Common to all : knew not of change in spirit  
By separation on, or under, earth.  
The wanderers noted, never any fane  
But one appointed green recess lay close,  
For those asleep in Christ. A palpable haunt  
Of living unity. Some came alone,—  
As to a sacred assignation, when  
No questioning eyes were near ; but sunset's hour  
Witnessed the household groups, reclining there  
On new-strewn rushes, mingling in their talk

Past, future, present, with a joy serene.  
And in each Trysting Place of Life were shewn  
The treasures of memories and hope,  
Flowering in beauty—bright on every grave.  
May we be so beloved when we are gone.

Flowers had their other intimations, too,  
Midst Joyous Gard's amenities. Distinct  
Their language as of written characters.  
The maiden pinned them on her kirtle—then,  
Her saucy spirit spoke,—“None sick am I,  
For love or lover!” But, within her tress  
Place one spray blossom, thereby guessed the thorp  
Where her heart's hope was placed: if on her  
breast  
White flowers of favour, then the nuptial day  
Drew near. When come, O, white, O, rapturous dawn!  
A second morn of life, by them revered:

Huts, meadows, hills, and streams, the heavens themselves

Rejoiced upon it.

But day and every day  
Was musical, as duty had been joy ;  
The pastoral labours led the dwellers forth  
With choral songs: song charmed the industrious hours,  
And evening's homeward march resounded glee,  
Answering the sky-lark's airy vesper hymn.  
Before were faintly seen the timorous stars,  
Through eve's last veil of light, oft were beheld  
The folding clouds above the western peaks  
Uprisen, and interspace of sky ; these drew  
Their gaze, who breathed the calm Arcadian air,  
Towards this disclosure of a glittering realm  
Within heaven's empires ; whereupon, they looked,  
O, with such eyes, such mirth of heart, such tongues

Of happy wonder. Clearly were descried  
Empyrean hills, towns, groves of golden palms  
Waving by jasper seas—high over all,  
Cope of effulgence, as were earth's mid-day  
By sun sixfold the summer strength of ours  
Illumed. Thus gazing, frequent sudden phrase  
Snapt evening's stillness : with their upward looks  
Upon that radiant scene, the uplifted soul,  
Bright in the eye, would burn upon the lips  
Brightly long-lingering. Was there, now, not seen  
The very Kingdom where their father's bode,  
And their inheritance ? Thus, one would point  
Where clustering palaces hung over plains  
Verdant as spring-time meads, and rulers name,  
Feared or renowned, residing there : and some,  
Claimed hamlets, scattered and recluse in vales,  
Loaden with shining harvests ; other some,  
By silver winding waters found a cot,

The home of household loves late lost to earth.  
So, till the high celestial pageant vanished.  
Then to those homes their own, with softened song,  
They turned, nor failed within their dreams to find  
The habitations of the just, wherein  
With greatest, best beloved, or best desired,  
Known by report or known within their lives,  
Sojourning until morn. The sight, the dreams  
Inwoven with their days, made joy of hope  
Their daily food, as wayside talk would show.

\* \* \* \* \*

When sought, four weeks o'erpast, their sea-girt towers,  
If change was there, no loss was there by change.  
The garland-daisies, large, foam-white, still culled  
For bridal-chaplets—this no change: if change,  
As when their steeds, being fetlock-deep in brine  
Paced heavily from the shore, the roaming Knight  
To Belle Isonde, "What be those flowery rays

New-blooming o'er our rocky doors ?" With smile  
She answering, " Stars of Bethlehem, my heart !"—  
Such change were gain. As felt her Lion-knight  
When murmuring, " Ever this fair province barred  
From the four judgments of the Lord. More grace  
Than grace of Love it owns, since everywhere  
Symbols of gospel peace, to soothe the soul  
With due remembrance." Spirit-bound in peace  
Through summer's months of light he strayed and  
strayed

In old loved ways, for ever new, with her  
His Beautiful, with her his perfect own :  
Together strayed, with old love ever new,  
Isonde and Tristram. Needs, then, no surprise,  
When seen the Rose of Sharon starred the steeps  
Beneath the castle's crystal walls, Isonde  
With pleading, hopeful eyes, " Here shall we live  
Ne'er to remove. Within these pleasant bounds



No strife calls on thee ; Love around us, Love  
Alone asks service. Tristram ! Rove no more ; "  
He might not answer, for he felt within  
These words were good ; words not to be gainsaid  
By martial phrases, nor hot-brained desires  
For noisy fame, mastery in arms, or sway  
Of kingship. Thus, he gladly tarried still,  
Love-lured, in wandering bliss at Joyous Gard.

The winter came. Then, on the breezy brows  
Of distant hills, as for their sole delight,  
The mists would gambol : sprites of ether, coy  
At near approach of man, and still transformed  
Persistently lest they be too well known ;  
The snow, the frost, showed on the lofty ridge,  
In branches, intertwined of dazzling bowers,  
In wreaths o'ertopping trees—the silenced rill,  
Glistening in moonshine—in the frozen meres

For winter sports—the beauty that has care  
For darkest season, and, sublimest sight,  
They saw, with feelings as unseen before,  
That punctual constellation on his march,  
Orion. Ocean-risen, he strode the deeps  
Eternal ; on the frosty night so near,  
In starry mail so terrible, nor less  
Appeared than monarch of the innumerable hosts  
Reviewed thus nightly.

Tristram tarried still.

The long night of the year—St. Thomas'—past,  
The days with lengthening light shone o'er the earth  
Exulting. But mid-Lent saw winter's months  
Wax wearisome. Whereon, he spake with one,  
The patriarch of the church, a hoary man,  
Blue-eyed, fair-skinned as youth, and soft of speech,  
The father of whose grandsire had report  
From one far-travelled who had seen the Christ,

Yea, seen the Christ. And, as the sight had been  
Miraculous, it was held from sire to son  
A holy thing, which made them holy men,  
Lineage of one acquaint, in very truth,  
With one whose eyes had seen the Christ. To him,  
Sullen Sir Tristram, "Father, you should know  
The monthly signs. May these chill barren days  
Not soon have end?" "I wot the signs, my son,  
Now fourscore years and five. Then, I was young,  
But those young times still mine, when first I wot  
The signs now wot of. I have felt the breath  
Over the sea this morn, sweet, mellow and sweet.  
And on our inland waters, since an hour,  
One little hour, and I beheld the pearl.  
And clouds which sought our Cheviot when the night  
O' th' year was darkest, and at Christ-mass tide  
Went, but crept back, the mellow-breathing sea  
Melted them. Look! They are not. Nay, not flown,

---

But melted by the breathing o' the sea.  
Its breathing brought the pearl upon the mere,  
Dissolved the clouds. See! where that form of  
    light,  
The mountain rill, descends with silver step ;  
Long hidden—now, full clear, and musical.  
Good signs be these. Wait, gentle Knight, but wait  
To-morrow's morn. These five-and-eighty year,  
The purposes divine have never erred,  
Nor can they now. That is thy token sure.  
All eyes may read. Sour days come, yet—but few.  
Wait, wait ! thyself shalt read it plain. Of flowers  
The golden star, the first joy of the year,  
Which shines before our winter-days are gone,  
Or e'er the crocus breaks its pale green sheath,  
Primrose or daffodil in sheltered dene,  
Or skylark brings its music for thy love ;  
That flower of grace abounds with us, and brings

Her message with to-morrow's morn. My son  
Shall see it, and his heart have peace."

As told,  
So was fulfilled the promise ; open bank,  
Hedge-rows, and mountain-rifts with living gold,  
And base of the great Keep, this firstling flower  
Made gorgeous.

Thus, that hopeful sight appeased,  
Subjected, laid in calm his feverous heart.  
But what, when tedious wind-cold times by-past ?  
Winter is gone. Spring follows. On the white  
Succeeds the green. What, in these springing hours ?  
Grass of the field : leaves in the woodlands ; light  
Between grey silver clouds ; the warbling becks  
From mountain-ways, and runnels in the meads,  
Springing, ever, everywhere. Spur to all hopes,

This spring ! What of aspiring thought ? Isonde  
Has burden of love-fancies ; Tristram's arm,  
Tumultuous yearnings—none to be assuaged  
But by the blood of evil, riotous now  
Within some vineyard of the Lord, where rule  
Of righteousness and peace had thriven of yore.

\* \* \* \* \*

By Zeemerwater, be ye sure, they sate  
Upon the first auspicious eve,—the hills  
Distinct within the crystal atmosphere,  
And tranquil as upon mid-day of June.  
This bright tranquillity, disturbed alone  
By plaining of the plover on the moors,  
Now and again, entranced, and even their mood  
Deepened the natural stillness. Tristram's harp,  
And he, alike, were silent : silent both,  
Master and harp : and silent, Belle Isonde :  
In silence near a verdant hillock sate

Intent both lord and lady on a stir  
But new-begun by shore and o'er the mere.  
Good time had brought the swallows, and this eve,  
Their first upon their blithe return. They flew  
In their home-coming glee, from marge to marge,  
Thither and back, thither and back again,  
Close to the lucid, motionless wave—above,  
Incessant flight of glossy blue-black wings,—  
Beneath, incessant flight of silver breasts.  
“ Happy the swallows, seeking this our lodge.”  
The soft eve's stillness undisturbed, so soft  
Her low-breathed accents : but the Lion-knight  
Loud answered,—“ Ay, the birds of heaven, wot well  
Their mission. They leave ocean-severed shores,  
Prescient to find. Ah, me ! yet man, proud soul,  
Divinity of dust, tricks his best sense,  
Juggles with reason, as fastidious  
The best to know from better—enterprise,

Such while, being guerdon unto weakly arms,  
Honour gilds other names." The fretful words,  
For Isonde had a bodeful tone. Each left  
The mere in silence. Ever, as was heard  
The plaining of the plover on the moors,  
It seemed the voice of her lost hopes to her  
The Beautiful. Yet with his words she strove  
To reckon hourly ; took him to his sport,  
Roused riotous cheer within the forest, brought  
Its rarest prey within his range. In vain.  
The falcon dozed unheeded on his wrist ;  
The music of the hounds unheard—past dame  
And knight, and squire, and flight of wings, his eye  
Made search for something far from Joyous Gard.  
He listened ghostly sounds from fields remote,  
Loud calling for retributory knight  
To quell the raging wrongs ; his spirit burned  
For meed of honour midst conflicting spears.



Thenceforth, a strong imagination held  
Possession of his soul, imperative,  
Insufferable, as message of the spring.<sup>1</sup>  
Spring's strengthening sun, was as the royal eye  
Of his great Dragon King, watching the land,  
Finding him derelict: each vernal morn,  
Earlier uprising with more angered hues,  
Each noon grown fiercer. His forsaken Queen,  
Heart-sorrowing, one more sleepless night o'er past,  
Felt her dark way to climb the circling stairs  
Which reached the castle's eastward tower—and, here,  
As carved in stone, his garment in the wind  
Of morning blown unheeded, Tristram stood  
Wide-staring at the opening of the day.  
She touched him, yet he moved not; then she spake,  
Nor gat reply. Wide-staring, not to her,  
But suddenly, as to a form in air  
Or other self within him, half remorse

And half despair, with husky, shattered voice  
Not heard before. "God's witness risen again !  
Faithful to restoration of the earth,  
Once more his radiant spear of ministry  
Hath struck the heart of darkness. Night is dead.  
But night within me holds my spear from night  
Investing Arthur's long-forgotten lands."  
His Queen held bitter ruth without a tear,  
And wreathed around his neck her shining arms,  
Whispering, "Away ! " Then, silver clear, "Away,  
My heart's lord ! lord of Honour ! ever liege  
To noblest thoughts. Go quickly. When Love bids  
Seek Joyous Gard again. I have but Love  
Which lives in thee." "The angel of my doom,"  
Cried Tristram, "now hath given me grace." Whereon,  
He bent his head, upon her lips bestowed  
Long exiled kisses, with a smile more bright  
To Isonde than the day-spring, or all flowers

New-wakened to its blessing. Ere came noon,  
She saw him dash along the common way  
Adventurous to the south, hastening his horse,  
Nor with one backward glance. "Woe me," she  
sighed,

"The heart of man is not as woman's heart.  
The frays of life his need, as his desire.  
Hope, action, then repose, o'er which the star  
Of hope beams welcoming to fair new fields.  
Action—repose—the star—'tis triumph all—  
The varied life—but what our life and hope,  
Unless our boon the pleasure of our lords?"

Seeking her bower, that day she waited there  
In woman's patience, as for some event  
Of promise. Twilight's fragrant hour being come,  
She called for Tristram's harp. This, Brengwain  
brought :

Placed it within her lattice, chance the breeze  
As from the master's subtle touch, might bring  
Past loving thoughts to her remembrance. Yea,  
The softest strings were moved,—thoughts came—and  
tears—

Which drowned the parting kisses on her lips,  
Living in sweetness there till then. Sweet tears,  
Made doubly sweet ; the lonely spirit drank  
Deep comfort from these tears. La Belle Isonde  
Was comforted ; for hers, a faithful lord :  
Foremost in valiance ; valiant, faithful, he  
Would come again, or glory in his plume,  
Or borne within his shield—or hurt, or whole,  
Would bring his glory and his harm, her hands,  
Her voice, might soothe or praise. “ My second soul,  
Brengrwain ! ” she cried ; “ how sinful in our griefs  
We lovers.” Harkening, Isonde paused as notes  
Changed in the wires : from sailing fancies these

Wafted her thoughts to harbour of an old  
Tintagel evening-time : fire from her lips  
In passionate flashing phrase burned in the ears  
Of Brengwain. Catching hard her maiden's hand,  
    “ This sweet perdition, I were loth to lose  
Though now I lost my love. Brave times were ours  
Joy-blossoming to the full : o'erflown with light  
From the new moon, until the large begat  
Love-day of night : the volume of the year,  
Leaves of its minutes, every whit inscribed  
With Love's dear scriptures. In our grief we sin  
Most deeply ; for, 'tis clear, the blossoming times  
Begot this term of Joyous Gard—these times,  
Even in their radiant blessed flight, evince  
Love's immortality. We have been here  
With loves undulled by absence, or defame,  
Or harsh opposing fortune. Mother of Christ !  
Be praised, for this forgiveness of our sin

In grieving. Yet, methinks, Brengwain, the grief  
Of love hath never with its fire or smoke  
Seared or smirched thee." Quick-answering with a  
smile,

Brengwain, "Dear Queen! Communion of sweet love,  
Thorough or liberal, never has been mine.

Only the houselling cloth to catch the crumbs  
And sacred fragments of love's joys, of which,  
In better favour, those like thee, know well  
The fulness and the ecstasy." "My maid,  
I say thee, nay: for I have proved, ere now,  
Thy knowledge of love's ways." "Of that, too  
much:

I have had lovers three, and all are gone;  
And each of them through love of me, some say.  
Yes, I can name the place, and squire. The first,  
Guerinus, in thy father's hall: he loved,  
He said, me: an folk say, he died. The time?

The very hour, Sir Tristram's harp had oped  
The postern door, and drew thee to his lodge.  
Thou may'st recall it ; from our sleep that night,  
A bird awoke us with wild storms of song.  
Alway, for years, 'twas with me, so that folk  
Called it my bird. Then, Knight of Peril's boy,  
The gentlest spirit in Tintagel—but,—  
Arthur has said it, Love may not be bound.  
I have known most of straits that chasten love ;  
Pains, trials, tears—but, somehow, all passed by  
Unharming. Passable, this love, methought :  
But, somehow, Urian died : an, then, there came  
Two birds : of richest plumage, as we see  
Glancing within the tourmaline, its hues.  
Last, Camelot. Bedveer was a winsome squire ;  
But Dinadin had there my fantasy.  
He crossed my peace of heart, but gave it back  
With sickness at his games, when Lonazep

Clothed honour with its glories ; for a man  
Shall be a pretty fool, but not a fool  
Too much, or he fools fancy from his grace.  
With all the ladies' laughter, I too, laughed,  
To know him fallen from my bosom's throne  
Sheer, irredeemable, to those dark depths  
Of scorn, which, close beneath the throne of love,  
Lie for a woman's safety. But enough  
Of that old pain. One dashed my peace, awhile,  
An, so, a trouble at my heart, awhile.  
If Bedveer felt it—why, 'tis nature's way ;  
No fault of mine. He passed ; there came," she raised  
A boastful finger towards the sky—" three birds !  
To haunt my life, with rarest voice. You think,  
Spirits of lovers be these birds : so said,  
By most. I care not guess. An for a fault,  
Fault none of mine. It was thy Tristram's harp  
Slew these my lovers, since each heard in it,



Parleying with thee, some dearer lover's voice,—  
So sank—so rose—and in these spirit-birds,  
Thy harp's voice sang. But neither one, nor all,  
When lovers were alive, gave me of Love  
Its full communion, like thy happy lot.  
I have the jest, the flying kiss, the gift,  
The promise—'tis gay to promise—these are crumbs,  
Poor crumbs, which fall at thy high feast of love."  
"I have no queenship o'er thy tongue, pert maid.  
Thou, aye, art merriest when I sorrow most.  
Where are thy birds?" "There's my just sorrow,  
Queen.

For since we entered bounds of Joyous Gard  
Never one heard or seen." "An this thy tale?  
Not worth its words: my mood is still unchanged."  
'But though my birds be gone, note that thy words,  
Assume no darkening queenship o'er my thoughts.  
Never hath grief set crow's-feet by mine eyes;

Nor hast thou known in me, for any loss  
The shadow of black samite thrown o'erthwart  
My speech or visage." "Thine, indeed, the dower  
Of pure and simple happiness, not high  
Nor low, but equable as May-dawn's light  
Fraught with a daily blessing. Mine the extremes.  
Even now my heavenly hope and strong, feels tears,  
Hours of still patience."

Nor of less than truth,  
Her words. No loved one then, her knight away,  
But treasured with a fine idolatry  
The helm, or spear, of her beloved, or shield,  
Or tabard, or his shoon with golden clasps.  
Isonde had Tristram's harp. This she arrayed  
In colours manifold as she might see  
Flash round the islets, midst the shallows sleep,  
Or glancing through the waters : and her eye

Watched it, as one will watch the face adored.  
Thus, during day. With eve, her trembling hands,  
As touching something to her lonely heart  
Too precious, in her casement placed the harp.  
Throughout the dusking hours, and far within  
The star-lit night, whene'er the cold sea-breeze  
Was busied in the strings, with listening ear  
And soul she would divine its noise. Perchance,  
To harbinger home-coming, spake that strain,  
Or ring his welfare—anyhow, it died  
And left paled beauty with her patient tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

Her Knight of the inviolate spear, wrought out  
Three worthy quests, of which their fame still rings  
An undertone in household stories ; quaint,  
Disguised, distorted, stretched beyond belief—  
For ages have their jealousies, and never  
In hot inventions wanting—fateful strength,

---

Their pride and poverty. The doughty deeds  
Ancestral, much too true to be gainsaid,  
Transmuted into fables of the hearth,  
Extravagant flourish to plain history,  
Magnify recent greatness. Give to lies  
The majesties of dread antiquity !  
Make heroes, marvels ! for not worth it, now,  
Disturb the glozings of the later times.  
Ne'erless, these quests of Tristram, know ye well,  
In all the glorious cycle of the deeds  
Of Arthur and his Knights, worthiest were these.

Whatever won by spear, a mournful time  
Wore slowly by in Joyous Gard. Isonde,  
He midst war's labours, sorrowed by his harp,  
Closed in her bower, nor of the night or day  
Took any counsel. Three weeks, morning winds  
Scouring the shores of Jutland, over-sea

Brought mists and fretting rains, which dull and  
chill,

Saddened the heart forsaken : now a morn,  
Morning of light, brake from the unveiled heavens ;  
Joy of the heart aroused the silent land.

But Isonde, what time Brengwain on her couch  
Combed her long golden hair, and song-voiced said,  
“ My Queen, has cheer of heart to-day ; her hair  
Springs to my fingers, and gay, glancing lights  
Flirt through the shadows,” Isonde no reply  
Vouchsafed her maiden. Widowed of her Love  
She kept its vigils, and, high noon being come,  
Heavily leaning upon Brengwain’s arm,  
The eastward farewell-tower she sought : nor yet  
Spake she her maid, but sighed in bitterness.  
When Brengwain, sighing too, “ O, lack-a-day !  
Sharp, sobbing winds again. Methinks, ’tis plain,  
That lovers’ eyes and lovers’ sighs make more

Love, than the rhyme tells. O, contrarious world.  
Love pines, yet grows." "So once 'twas whispered  
me :

An I wit where, an when, by whom. Ay, ay,  
Love's simplest words—heart's gospel of a truth—  
O'er faith and passions keep the golden seat  
Within the halls of memory. Brengwain, list.  
Again, to my soul's longing—list, the lark  
Above yon field. Of all the birds be mine  
The homely, heavenly lark. He sings by love,  
Or singeth not : love gives him wing and song,  
To which spring flowrets open. I was called  
The Beautiful, when one there was who sang  
And soared above me. Beauty ! 'tis a plume :  
But lacks of song. Ah me, he singing soared  
High in heaven's light, and as a crimson flower  
My heart would open, and as silver rain  
Drink his full music. O, what joy divine

Held those old hours, for me ! What his—the  
bird's,

On singing wings of love, nearing the sun—  
What joys were his ! And yet his myrtle breath  
Told me in language sweeter than his song,  
His joy of joys to nestle by my side.

Ah, sighing fancies, Brengwain, trouble still.

But I'll no more." " Angling again, sweet Queen !

But will, or no will : say you not, or say :

Love's instant comes to all. Whatever hues

Or shapes in the embroidery of your talk,

Little things please, and sudden give delight—

And o'er them all the primacy of love,

To keep, or sparsely give, or yield entire.

So, thou art not thyself : nor is this mood

Thine own. And when Love orders otherwise,

Thou wilt be very that ; the instant's child :

Its very child of Love. So Love ordains."

Upon the hour of Angelus—the sea,  
Whose shining noon of sleep the mountain breeze  
Shook into diamond dimples, now the sun,  
Descending on the hills, effulgent calm  
Poured over steep and lands, so, now the sea  
Clear mirror for the evening star—Isonde  
Gazed from her lattice, in her breast no calm,  
Nor strife of hopeful thoughts ; her spirit's grief,  
Within her heavy, dull, encumbering hair,  
Declined from all its prime and life of morn,  
Too surely shown.

A watery tract, due south,  
Owned of a high-cliffed cove, the Dolphin's Nest  
Well named—since there oft seen at close of day,  
As now were seen, their natural gambollings  
In sparkling foam-breaks blent with iris hues.  
These watched she mournful, with the magic harp



Close by her side ; not speaking peace to her,  
Although its soft, slow, Lydian harmonies  
For her content, had made all others gay  
On hearing them. But note ! there comes no breeze—  
Rigid as sculptured image Belle Isonde,  
Her dew-cold cheek upon her hand—but stir  
Is in her tresses : from their fillet slipped,  
And fluctuating in the evening light  
Long-linging—golden now, then dark—in change,  
Shadowing and gleaming, troubles they foretell  
Of pleasures in approach : quick, she intent  
On varying warble in the strings. A voice  
High sounding martial carols : clink of steel :  
The charger's nimble thunder-steps, pursued,  
Distracted the even music. “ Praise to thee,  
Meek Mother of our Christ ! Now yield my soul  
Strength in these weakest moments. Duly kept  
Great Love's canonical hours,” wept Belle Isonde :

---

“ Prayers, lauds, humility and tears, found me  
Thy child obedient. Mother ! hold my heart,  
Now that the sanctus-chimes of ecstasy  
Abrupt o’ertake thy child. Brengwain ! ” she cried,  
“ My lord ! your lord ! my peerless knight ! my own !  
Next to my God, divinity and love—  
He comes.”

And never presage from that harp  
Misled. Before his radiance in the shades  
Augmented, and from eastern deeps his lamp  
Led forth the large round moon, bright Hesperus  
Sparkled on Tristram’s casque beneath the towers  
Of Joyous Gard.       \*       \*       \*

## III.

A MONTH storm struck, the city of the King,  
Compassed with clouds, lit by their lightnings, shook  
By intermittent thunders, Camelot,  
Felt night of fate on Logris. Arthur held  
Daily his council with the Table Round :  
But oracles of spear and hope sate there,  
Silent upon the gathering doom. Last, cried  
That dragon-voice, known not in earth or sky  
Save from the King in his extremity,  
Whereon, till these late days of storm and gloom,  
Lions, became his sinking knights, and swift  
Fury from faintness, victory from dismay,  
"Launcelot hath fled in sickness : half my Ring  
Be questing after echo of a name ;  
Our every siege is desolate, save some,

---

And these be knights of court, of song, of love,  
Not of the steadfast war ; the Pagan rides  
Full-fed with blood and rapine through our lands,  
And my own hurt, deep, where the heart receives  
All of its earthly strength, and that betrayed,—  
Woe, to us men, that our divinity  
Suffers upon such visitations—quick,  
As from the godhead we descend to dust.  
My single valour fails. Be there not one  
Inheritor in soul of my best days,  
To tell the throne, the good of past still lives,  
To thwart the Pagan, of rebellion stay  
Its treasonous tide ; that this, the land of Christ,  
Christ his own trust, shall still support my choice,  
And shake the gates of hell. Ye, hear my voice,  
Answer ! ” But answer none, save from each siege  
Vacant, his voice gave answer of his words,  
Like a weird echo from the mountain caves

Of Cumbria, when the autumn day is dim,  
Air still, streams hushed, and dwellers in the dales  
Depressed from lack of light, and burdening mists.  
This was the time, when Launcelot soul-perplexed,  
Eclipsed in mid-morn of his wild love  
For Guinevere, sharp-stricken into dark,  
Fled from the court and strayed a savage man.  
Wrath was in Arthur's words. The Ring disturbed,  
Dissolved, to wait seven days before despair  
Usurped their patience. God might send, perchance,  
Auxiliar to the sunshine which must come  
Favour of armed help.

That day was peace—  
Brightest above the Ocean Pleasaunce: then,  
Tristram partook his largest rest. His harp,  
Long while, within the casement, as they sate,  
Our lovers in repose in Isonde's bower,

Rejoiced their hearts ; and Tristram, thick in voice,  
Had spoken, ending thus, " In all my pains  
Each thorn has had its rose ; but this the day,  
Flower of the times of Joyous Gard, which springs  
Surely from perils manifold, and foul,  
Unspeakable, on my late quest ; such root  
In suffering have our joys : and, now, methinks,  
This day-flower blown and withered, we must hold  
Fast to our pleasure's life, thy hand with mine  
Love-leagued, intent on gentlest ways, so thwart  
Opposing fate." A marvellous stillness fell  
On the harp's seven-fold strings, still tremulous  
To the low-breathing breeze. Anon, they hear  
Miraculous carol, winging over-sea ;  
Far, far away, yet sounding as beneath  
The lattice eaves ; now high in heaven, yet clear  
As on the lattice ledge ; a song of bird  
All of all song of birds that on the spray

Warble at eve and morn, or in the bush,  
When summer-fragrant, through the darkness sing,  
Or hovering o'er the grassy field. They knew  
The harp was mute, and heard the song. Brengwain  
Was ware, in bower beneath, the harp was mute,  
And knew the song, and cried in joy, " My bird !  
O Lover-birds, which of your spirits now,  
From Ireland comes, or Camelot, who loved  
My younger year ? But welcome any one.  
O, faëry bird ! O, wingèd soul of Love !  
O, hither to me, hither ; let me hear  
The parable within thy wings. Woe, me,  
In dread of hurt, my bird of love comes not."  
Advised by Brengwain's accents, Tristram rose  
And strook his harp. As unto music, strings  
Of instrument will answer music, came  
Unto the harper's song the bird and perched—  
A feathered flame of flickering hues, as tame

To hand and tongue—on the harp's golden crest,  
To make the bower a shrine of song and fire  
Impetuous, delirious. Eye and ear  
O'erwrought, Isonde sank, as from ecstasy  
Of love or sorrow. Towards the friendly bird  
The Knight stretched forth his hand—two eagle's  
wings,  
Outspread—two plumes of flame—one shrilling  
note,  
Dread as the heart of battle—and no bird,  
No flame, no song. Upon the floor there lay  
A missive, as of thunder born, which claimed  
The Lion-knight.

Seven days, thereafter, sate  
For last resolve, in clouded pomp, the King  
With Table Round in council. Arthur's heart  
Resigned in his despair, cried, " My one speech !



Launcelot fled in his sickness : no help comes :  
Go find me Tristram ! He wots well a man  
Must make himself a bridge, to make him chief."  
A proud voice smote the silence of the hall :  
In every empty siege rang clashing swords,  
And every knight leaped up as newly dubbed  
Christ's warrior : Tristram answers ! " Here be I.  
The ancient oracle of Lyonesse  
Finds me, her Knight, as ever, spear and bridge."  
Then, Arthur questioned, " Wilt thou aid our  
throne,  
Our faith, our throne's estate ? " " Neath sun and  
stars,  
In watches on the weald, by shore, on sea,  
With arms, or prayers, or song, until returns  
My brother Launcelot, or unto the death.  
Behold ! " And Tristram held his hand aloft ;  
And Arthur cried aloud, " He gives his oath ! "

---

Then Tristram led forth knights, and squires, with  
bands

Of yeomen—eagles, lions, serpents—strong,  
Swift, subtle—virtues fresh-imbreathed, and clad  
Gaily as if for love-quest ; and the day,  
As fortune-changed, victorious golden showers  
Dispensed, of light descending bountiful.

Two years, from eastern to the western coast,  
Up through the length of Logris, he the main  
Held of the Table Round, of valiance, light,  
Honour, each splendour won for it afore  
By Lancelot and the Dragon King. Such deeds  
Adventurous, dreadless, desperate from the spear  
Of aid-in-need, and sword of Pagan-dread,  
Clanged through these years, they were of highest  
fame

In the Pendragon era ; all bygone,  
But ushered, like to shades of heathen feats,

The morning of this virtuous valiance.

Never wide Logris, ere those years, or since,

In cleanliness of law and peace so shone.

This was the very haleyon time, foretold

When Arthur's golden baby-fingers played

Within the hoar of Merlin's locks, when one,

A diademed maiden, paced from Camelot

Companionless, by outlying, loneliest ways,

Through city and by thorp, at dusk and dawn

Unto her northern island-halls—there came

Unharm'd, unquestioned, unrep'roached, alone.

Our chronicles in England's ancient tongue

Set forth, that Tristram on Midsummer's day

In this his final, royallest Logrian quest,

Encountered one of lean and sinewy frame,

Strong-jointed, one whose visage told he fared

In soul more hardly than in three-score fights—

The frenzied Palomide ; who, lance in rest,  
Or e'er he charged, cried, " Tristram of the Gard  
Joyous ! best joy be thine. I, from my soul,  
Bless thee, although I strike. Since last thy hand  
Gave hospitable grace to mine—whereon  
Odin reproved me—gracious Hand of Light  
Hath overshadowed me from Breidalblick—  
Balder's—from whose fair faith was drawn thy  
Christ's.

And silver May, and roses of thy June,  
In thicket and in by-ways of the woods,  
For me have blown their fragrance, and my spear  
Hath sped on quests of love alone—such grace  
Balder bestows, though I none less forlorn ;  
Which makes me bless thee, Tristram. This day mine ;  
Thine, too. I shall go back to Joyous Gard,  
Its chambers in lament for loss of thee,  
But more rejoicing in the sun-god's knight,

Who brings its pleasures to the flower from tears—  
From tears and dust of dolour. Both are blest :  
Since thou shalt be my conquest, and, thereby,  
Death shall approve thee perfect knight. Isonde !  
Isonde ! Isonde ! " That word ; then, their  
career.

Each gave attaint, naming the Beautiful !  
Isonde !—What powers of air now countervail  
That name, its influent virtues ? Both demeaned  
Their course so ill, not any knight of youth  
In Logris had achieved such meed of shame.  
Their steeds from errant bridles swerved, each spear  
Struck wide, and had not war-horned hands been  
theirs

Defiled in dust had lain as well as foiled.  
Each at the other gazed aghast, nor spake.  
Some moments. Then, the pagan, spear in rest,  
Voice charged with madness,—

“By great Balder's glance !

Whence women beautiful, and cowards brave ;  
By his bright shining voice ! heard in my soul,  
To hasten doom ; by his divinity !

Who highest stands to-day on Himmelberg,  
Heaven's hill of endless summer ; by his glance,  
And utterance ! this his own career approved,  
Shall, quickly, have his own victorious meed.

Divinity in arms as well as peace !

He subjects thee, sad Christian, to his faith.”

The Knight of Upsal's golden dome drave hard,  
Met by Sir Tristram in mid-course ; the attaint,  
Well-given, direct, full-forced, both men of proof  
Were swept from horse. Mounting, dark Palomide  
Breathed heavily, as of the heat o'erborne,  
Or thoughts of awe and wonder. “Now, my god !  
Patron-prophetic of new light to come,  
Thyself earth's Greatest Light, O help thy son,

Thou Greatest Light for men ! unless appears  
The Light Divine, indeed—the Light no veil  
Of flesh could bear. But no, first, fairest god !  
None may usurp thy beauteous powers : no  
more,

Than in mid-winter—when thyself wast slain,  
Balder ! to rise beyond the verge of spring—  
One Light, in dead mid-winter, should appear  
Refulgent beyond spring, or summer's prime,  
Summer within the soul, high summer more  
Than summer of heaven's hills. No, God of  
smiles !

Of sanctity, and might ! in thee, by things  
Immutable, I swear, to make this course  
Thine own. Death to that other faith. Now, aid  
Thy son ! Thine inspiration in mine arm  
Unto the zeal of hate, quick in my spear,  
Quickly responds."

---

On this attain't his lance,  
As in the noontide shone a shaft of gold ;  
Its point shot arrowy beams, which backward sprang,  
Clothing his helm with radiance of seven suns.  
And Tristram's lance nor failed, struck home ; but  
fierce,  
So fierce the glory and the fury, both  
Unhorsed, lay earth on earth. Sir Tristram kept  
That spear-sleep two long hours : awakening, then  
The pagan where he fell, lay earth on earth,  
Still, as deep-drunken of the draught of death.  
And through that night, that soft midsummer's night,  
Sorrowing he sate, for solace of his woes  
Harping beside the spear-struck Palomide ;  
Sorrowing unto his harp to lose one lost  
In love. And, lo ! as rose the sun, the eyes  
Of Palomide opened, and amazed he spake :—  
“ Large comfort in the house of death, my soul



Gained to attend thy music. Now, new light  
Making new day, I see ! and likewise know  
My sun-god entered now the road of Night  
Leading to Death in deep mid-winter. List,  
There, as before ! methought, as, then, thine harp  
Played, that its music sprang, or music woke  
In heaven. Ah, such soul-healing harmonies :  
Earth's voices silent, she, transported heard  
Angels in their ethereal choirs, and song  
Wherein a name divine—that of thy Christ !—  
Spake the soul's everlasting peace."

To this,  
Tristram astound, as hearing dead lips speak,  
Could make no answer ; and to charm those tears,  
Which knightly hearts must yield to knightly woe,  
He bade the pagan rise and prove his sword :  
So, forthwith, end their valour's play. But this,

Refused with high, majestic voice, restored  
Palomide, as again avowed his love  
For Belle Isonde, and what the worship he  
Had gotten by her. "Now, since death may come,  
As from her hands, through thee her favoured peer,  
I take the doom. Blest be thy stroke which brings  
Deep night to me : for day without her grace  
Is worse than dark, and death's dark with its peace  
Most gracious gift, from thy hand as from hers.  
Strike, noblest brother of hall or tourney, strike !  
There—I unlace my corslet—strike !—And why  
This gentleness ? that tear ? Nay, by thy faith !  
Thou conquerest better than with arms of steel.  
Upon my waking sense now comes my dream—  
Frost, and bright snow, the constellated spheres ;  
In them, the music, and the angel-song  
Which smites earth's serpent-sorrow. Now, no more  
Her children lack their comfort : now, no more

Our souls know winter-death : but winter deep  
Contains of heavenly joy the living spring.  
Thy gentleness !—O, thou of sweetest voice  
And sentence, with the utterance of thy harp  
Making one music, magical as notes  
Blown from the vernal heights when broke the east  
Through Asgard's bowers, thy Queen disclaims my  
love ;  
Make it thine own ! And, now, the sacrifice,  
The victory, and the dedication, here  
Shall be complete. I have foregone my hope :  
My hope but not my love ; on that, no more ;  
I here renounce my heathen heart : from hence,  
That of the Cross be mine."

When nine days spent,  
Recovering from the ardours of the fight,  
Together for King Arthur's court they rode.

---

Upon their way, so high the pagan felt  
The new ascension of his spirit, that nought  
Might now delay such sacred rites required  
To enclose him in Christ's fold. Thus, Palomide  
Bowed at the feet of Cardoyle's suffragan,  
The solemn blessing of the water heard,  
And known the sprinkling of the holy dew,  
Upon his soul arose the Light Divine  
From sacrament of baptism, and the man  
Became of Christ, and evermore was Christ's.

Mighty the noise of joy at Camelot,  
To learn the gain of Faith. Once more, had bloomed  
The rose of chivalry—to win the soul  
For Christ. Here, seen one of those iron hearts,  
Whereby upheld the ritual and the shrines,  
Golden on Upsal's plain, arrayed in weeds  
Novitiate. Noise of sportive joys rang round

The halls and homes and fields of Camelot,  
Mightily, on this gain of Christ's white Faith.  
Here, four calm weeks knight-royal Tristram stayed,  
Until accomplished in their order due,  
Within the quarters of the moon, those rites,  
The church's discipline and secret cell,  
By Palomide: who, then, at morn received—  
Bathed all the chancel with the virgin light  
New-risen in east—so, purely he received  
The housell from Dubricius' holy hands;  
Now, of the church of Christ made one—as one,  
Evermore, of his Christ, was Palomide.

Then, to his service Tristram; leaving there,  
Detained till next year's jousts at Pentecost,  
The convert knight, who, such time, made acquaint  
Of court, of courtly ways, and of that bond,  
Kept in the Table Round, to keep the flame

---

Divine of purpose in the spirit quick,  
Bright, serviceable for all needs. His heart  
Marvelled to learn the cycle of the year  
Was consecrate through every month and day :  
Noted with various mood and various rite,  
The church, upon the numbers of man's life  
Its own emblazoned clear. Most at Christ's-mass,  
His marvel ; in the deep dead-winter set  
The living lamp of fervent righteousness,  
Unto whose season looked the festival  
Dedicate to St. Michael and his host  
The angels : with a heart elate he hailed  
Felicitous Epiphany : but shared  
The spiritual gloom which overcame the Court  
Through saddened Lent, till, with rejoicing lauds,  
Sunday of Golden Palms rose bright to greet  
The church triumphant—sorrowing thence, awhile,  
Till agony divine made Golgotha

Dark in the day-shine ; sorrowing but this while,  
For soon the psalms of victory ascend,  
The Grave destroyed, Death quelled, and made the  
spring  
Of Life Eternal—thence, the fair time led  
To Pentecost.

This, now drawn nigh ; from hall—  
Where held in talk with Guinevere, her friend  
Vivien, the sparkle of whose eye bewrayed  
The flock of love she leagued with ; Mordred—he,  
Rarely within the Court or sun's light seen,  
But lurking in outlying bowers, or slunk  
In council-chamber shadows—Palomide,  
Called thence by mandate of the King, first saw  
Accomplished every apostolic seat  
Of Arthur's Table Round : and rising tiers,  
Wherein sat kings, earls, princes, barons and knights,

Seven score and ten, and in the Dragon-throne  
Arthur himself, august, supreme in peace ;  
Within our bosoms still a light and hope ;  
And over him his shield emblazed with powers  
And glories, thirteen golden crowns, with words,  
“ More crowns, more virtues.”

Gentleness and power,

Such ne'er so crowned before in east or west,  
Nor since, wherever risen or fallen the state,  
Or stands the empire : as o'er Brimham's heights,  
Where, like some city's skeleton, the rocks  
Lie ranged, upon their central eminence  
One proudly peers, of balance all so fine  
A babe's hand stirs it, but ten mailed men  
Of no more strength to move, so is he moved  
By kindness, unremoved by fear or force.  
Painfully breathed the faith's new Knight to view



The sight magnifical, beyond desire  
Or dreams for earth, or for his warrior's heaven,  
Foregone. And as he gazed deep silence lay  
On all the sieges of the Table Round,  
Attending Arthur's voice, which closed a strain  
Of stately, heart-strong, slow, religious speech,  
Filling the previous hour.

“ We fight the fight  
We may not hope to win. Hope, not less ours :  
For with our hallowed arms we may deter  
Invading evil, nay, decrease the bands  
Co-operate against our Lord the Christ.  
Honour enough in heathen times to be  
Preparers of the way.” As Arthur spake,  
In chastened tones these humble words and strong,  
A murmurous wonder sprang throughout the Ring—  
For, lo, with crown celestial, Arthur crowned.

They saw the rarest of all holy sights ;  
In mid-air, o'er his head, of crimson hues  
The thrice-woven mystic sign, presenting seven  
Rays silver-tipt, o'er each a silver star  
Hovering.

The lustrous miracle dissolved,  
Thick-beat the Christian heart of Palomide,  
When he regarded one of angel-face,  
Upright, within the siege called Perilous.  
The light upon that face, as when the priest  
Bestows his benediction, and the fane  
Grows luminous on assurance to the soul  
Of Holy Life there breathed, nor pausing there  
But passing o'er Death's deepest deeps to make  
The sepulchre a court of light. " And say,  
Who may that be ? " he asked. " And who the dame  
That gives him sunny countenance and cheer

Beyond our brethren of the Table Round ? ”  
Said Launcelot, sighing, “ Galahad, my son ;  
Knight of the Lord ! To be the knightly saint  
First in our calendar. Our best beloved.  
More than our grace is his.”

Then, in his voice  
Thick trouble, Launcelot spake in undertones :—  
“ No man hath guided him unto his quest,—  
No man. Alone, eye-witness hath he been  
Of God his excellent glory. Ministries  
From heaven have counselled him—may be, in  
dreams—  
Certes, within the brightness of the east  
At dawn, when best he loves to rise for prayer.  
Beholding him at matins, glorified  
By presences invisible, divine,  
The effulgence of his purposed, pious quest

Gleams on his visage, and we bow the head  
In worship of it. But five hours ago,  
The oracular presences have been : he goes  
With morrow's morn to find the Holy Grail,  
And others go to seek."

The large tears rose,  
The first-born Christian tears of Palomide,  
With this report, which simply, briefly told  
The spiritual mission of that radiant youth,  
Whom rival ne'er dispraised, nor slander soiled,  
Snow-white unto this hour. The large tears fell.  
He wept for very gratefulness : but, soon,  
At his exclusion from pursuit, where faith  
Should sanction valour. " Woeful knight, am I.  
Galahad gains the glory : none is mine ;  
Evil my heritage. Then, my resolve  
Shall seek its direst shape ; by it, win fame,

Which glory shall approve ! " Pain at his heart  
Bound further utterance : silent, he beheld  
Wondering, that sight magnificent, first time—  
Last time for him, for all men. Nevermore,  
In scarlet richly furred—those robes of peace—  
Each in his siege : no more, shall be convoked,  
In their ascending circles and degrees,  
Knights, barons, princes, earls and royalties,  
The noble fellowship of the Table Round.

Galahad gone, the belts of brave and strong  
Dissevered, most to search lands west and east,  
And some by stoutness, some by patience, some  
By pious, penitential labours, some  
By perilous adventure,—Palomide,  
Consecrate for his famous quest, set forth  
For that strange creature, spawned of Night, sin-  
scarred,

The Questing Beast, abhorred of men, whose tongue  
Is as a sword, its breath as of hell-fire,  
And which may not be slain : but, he it caught  
Bound it in bands, preserved man from its hurt.  
Since then, broke loose, it rangeth everywhere,  
Preying upon man's name, and body, and soul :  
Yet, praise to him, that for some while he kept  
That shameful scourge of Scandal from our land.

## IV.

SIR LAUNCELOT healed in spirit, restored to court,  
Tristram, the peerless of the Table Round,  
Retired, and Launcelot, now its Dragon-knight,  
Resumed his place, his powers. Thence, free to north,  
Hastened the knight-of-help, to her, Isonde,  
Of love and soul his star, that as herself,  
And far beyond herself, loved him.

But ne'er  
Came whole from fray a knight with cloven helm :  
And many broils are grievous howe'er won :  
And blows abate at length the pride of war :  
And Tristram, spent in spirit and frame, drew home,  
Though gems and praise his guerdon. " Faith, my  
sweet !  
This latest month, forsaking halls and cot,

I took chance wayside Cross for nightly host.  
 Brave cheer, but icy, when the ruddy lips  
 Of bleeding wounds crave for a care like thine."  
 Long was his healing, and his chastened soul  
 Would get fresh hurt at tidings from without :  
 But drank with grateful joyousness, as from  
 The four fair springs of Paradise, the love,  
 The peace, the trust, the beauty, living here  
 Within the heavenly homes of Joyous Gard.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* But no sad thought,

Whilst Joyous Gard is ours—ours, as 'tis theirs,  
 Our lovers'. Hasten not, then, as ye hear,  
 Gentles ! With Tristram's growing strength, his all  
 Was all love might desire ; seclusion far  
 From wranglings of the world ; health, waiting still  
 On action : every season of the day  
 Diverse in aspect of delight.



Most sweet,

The sharp and quickening odours of the sea :  
Most beautiful, in languid hours to watch  
The folding, fleecy, foam-clouds o'er the reefs,  
Rising and wreathing, floating, falling—still  
To climb and swirl, and heave and sink, and rise,  
For ever ; dear, to stray where every step  
Woke fragrance ; seeking tangled forest-paths,  
With bird and rill harmonious ; thorough fields,  
Which lacked the frequent step, to silent heights  
Unreached aforetime ; or, aweared, learn  
Love's rest was claimed by yonder shy green shade.  
And then, the eager stir, when woodland ways  
Rang merry as of old with Tristram's horn.  
Like to his spear, his eye and voice were powers  
For judgment ; oft, between, there came the chase  
In airy fields ; his pride might not abate  
Its wings ; he crowned past glory as the lord

---

Of sport ; he won the eagle to his lure,  
And made it tractable as falcon-gentle—  
Kingliest of sports.

No wonder, here the Knight  
Desired to linger : rather, wonder why  
Depart ? The peaceable humanities  
Of this dominion, silently and strong  
Wove those invisible gossamer threads which bind  
Man's spirit to his home, his friends, his fields,  
Fast to the uttermost, and unto death.  
Touched was his heart, to witness all that war  
Boasted as glorious boon, accomplished here  
In tenderness, simplicity, and trust.  
The choral voices of the bands of toil  
Gladdened each morning ; in their homes, their lives  
Defrauded by no rueful memories  
Had cloudless cheer : hope rested confident

Upon the change called death—made present, past  
With future, one—one placid whole—the gift  
Angelic of the Father of our prayers.  
Thus every simple heart became a room  
For beautiful and pious thoughts.

Said they,  
“All we behold leads unto Life. This seen ;  
By night, by day, on every side, this seen—  
And where we cannot see, Christ is our trust.”  
And these humanities, and hopes well told  
Each Stranger's Home, lawn-girdled, at this time  
Roofed with its jasmin, glittering with its stars,  
The hermitage for all way-worn ; of peace,  
The flowery shrine. Whenever they would near  
God's acre, now rose-hedged, some new surprise,  
As Love had mysteries there, awaited them ;  
And if they missed revisiting, some man,

Or woman, or child, would beckoning lead them there—

“ For, wherefore to your servants were ye sent

But, as of old, angels, to re-assure ?

And here the holiest ground whereon to stand

For this.”

Nay, but themselves were re-assured

In happiest faith. With spring, the primrose spread

Moonlight of memories o’er every grave ;

In autumn, central there one letter bloomed

Delectable in gold—the father priest,

Last gone from every household, his earth’s dust

Spake to them brightly, then. The live-long day,

The fields of duty were in song ; at eve,

Garlanded labourers homeward-bound with pomp

And noisy joys excelling those of war,

The Sanctuary of Remembrance reached, their notes

Rang gentler cadence with soft canticles,

Or circumfluent sounds of murmured psalms.

Bound, then, themselves for home, La Belle Isonde,  
And he, her other heart, the Hesper Rose  
Within the pensive shadows of the eve  
Along their path, to them displayed its prime ;  
That bloom of gold withdrawn from gold of day,  
Shone in the hour of hope's nativity  
To lovers dearest, as they hand in hand  
Through devious ways, with gentle pace, and speech  
Softer than the communion of the leaves,  
Once more, enraptured sought their ocean-bowers.  
In Isonde's eyes, this while, the noon of love  
Was cloudless, clear, and full. Throughout these days,  
It were as time had shed his plumes and passed  
All unrecorded by the living sense ;  
And none of Isonde's fears but perished then,  
Light-slain, flower-shrouded, sepulchred in song.

In this the closing restful time, came one  
Who told it, Mark back to his Christ-less throne

Had crept : but there, sore-wearying, missing knight,  
Defence and glory : missing wife of grace  
And charms of gentleness. But then the churl,  
Abashed in loss of welcome, nerveless spoke  
In short his errand, like to one who sings  
His verse with all the words of all its thoughts,  
Yet lacks the master-key of melody,  
Foliage at once and flower of human voice.  
Thus, aught of Mark or Mark's estate, were but  
Dead-birth of news, its swaddling-clothes its shroud :  
Silence on its nativity, no tears,  
No sigh of sympathy, no smile of hope,  
Buried, forgotten, soon as known—the Gard  
Untroubled kept its golden, deep repose,  
Cornwall its craven sorrows.

Later, brought,

Upon a sobbing eve, which wept the loss

Another love-day gone, far other news,  
By one sea-travelled, haggard, soiled and weak.  
A requiem wail of many grieving hearts,  
Was in that stranger's voice, and of the tomb  
Its stillness, coldness, when his homely word  
Disburdened.—Isonde of the Lily Hands,  
The virgin-wife, in Brittanie long left,  
Was taken of the Christ she served. There went  
To Tristram's heart a venom'd arrow home,  
His own the sharpening and its dolorous wound.  
Green Brittanie now mourned its vestal gone ;  
One never much unhappy : for to miss  
The love of one who loved not her, sustained  
Her faith in love more perfect. Any hope  
Was, he might love more thoroughly, and, thereby,  
Be finer Knight of Honour and of Love.  
One never much unhappy : hers, the gift  
Unconscious, to enjoy the flowers which spring

Within the present : these, avert the sense  
From past—flowers of the best grow now, the flowers  
Fairer from by-gone winds and rains—nor she  
Took usury of the future which despoils  
These flowers.      Minds modern wisely have foregone  
This boon.

A very woman she, whose time  
Was filled with mild and beautiful devoirs,  
Whereby, redemption of our kind from coarse  
Mad revels of man's passionate strengths. But, then ;  
She was a king's daughter ! Ay, ay, but saints  
Can clothe in satin, be saints still, though oft  
In satin sinners lost, and of desire,  
Wanting the satin, thereby, born some sin.  
Yet, saints are saintly still. Midst courtly blooms  
First-placed, she as a violet reserved,  
Its place best known from hidden perfumes. She,



Nun of the shade : a virtue clothed in robes  
And sheen of cheerfulness ; sun-ray of home,  
Brightening its rooms with labours of its grace ;  
A sportive angel chasing tediousness  
From household hours : midst trials, holding still  
The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,  
Of greatest price within the sight of heaven.  
Those fragrant fingers done their courteous toils,  
The spirit's duties ended, farewell said,  
For good and all her gentle sleep she took,  
Handmaiden of her Christ unto the end.  
The greenest grass in Brittanie, to-day  
Grows o'er the dust of Lily Hands. But, brief.  
Tongues light have mocked her—named her, a slight  
flower,  
Crushed by the martial foot of life—some, less—  
A weed. There is a plant, most known as weed,  
Beneath the cruellest step sends forth a breath—

The incense of a sacrifice—say that  
Of Lily Hands, and higher laud we ask not.

This vestal wife, her Lion-spouse long mourned  
Within the sadness of a cave, still shown  
Beneath a headland's yellow cliff. He kept  
Vigils of sorrow, smart with tears, and scourged  
With worse than serpent-thongs, remorseful thoughts.  
Nor after—as in midnight of his woe—  
But he, in awe and reverence of a love  
That veered not on his own transgression, bent  
His head on mention of her name.

But, Love,  
Heard once from Palomide, is free. Yes, free,  
In bondage to Love's will ; for Palomide  
Free, had to yield the worship of his soul

To Belle Isonde. Lamenting, Launcelot owned  
Thralldom in liberty of love. For truth,  
For right, law's righteousness, the foremost spear  
Launcelot's ; he mourned the flower of Astolat,  
Consumed by passion of his fame ; he mourned,  
Yet, clave to Guinevere. And as these things  
Accorded with the counsel of the King  
To Launcelot, " Love is free within himself,  
Nor ever will be bound : for when 'tis bound  
Then loseth Love itself, and is no Love ! "  
So, I may say no more, who am Love's liege,  
Than that it has been writ, and not gainsaid,  
These things were done, were spoke, in unison  
With times and passion ; and his anguish laid  
By lengthened, sorrowing showers, he sought the sun,  
Tristram—forsook his cavern-hermitage—  
His one-love faith, his first, one, only, kept  
Rigorous, as vowed, unto his death.

Three years,

Nothing of death or glooms of doubt, decay  
Or change, his spirit less and less required  
The melancholy, busy ways of men—  
But life of joyaunce, as of summer leaves  
Dancing within the prodigal sunshine, vowed  
To liberties of mirth. In Joyous Gard  
These three years passed. Then came a change, indeed.  
Not now, as in past time, may Cornwall's head  
Plead and be scorned, its recreant woes despised.

Regal Carduel—there, the Dragon King  
Held loud unwonted festival : convened  
The beauty and the valour of his realms  
For tournament, with minstrels from Norroy,  
From Cumbria's hills ; but famousest from Wales,  
Led by Taliessen's carol of the joy  
Launcelot returned from honoured quest—such joy,

As though no Tristram missed, nor wanted more :  
As though, some long-lost planet rode again  
Brighter, with rarer fortune-gifted beams  
Within the Table's firmament of fame.  
Deep in these pastimes, Arthur's hand received  
A hurried missive.

Mark would holpen be ;  
Craved grace in his old craven way. " My throne,  
Besieged : my good lands everywhere burnt up  
With pagan hoofs of fire : doubly down-borne :  
Forsaken : O, friend-royal ! in my need,  
'Neath punishment for sins, I say not how,  
Nor when—but thou—forgetting thy past wrongs  
From Cornwall, best will know—let thy large love  
Be strength unto me." And the gentle King  
Felt ruth within him for the dole of Mark :  
Led to his chamber, with his counselling Knights.

Thence Arthur, after long debate, retired  
With those three, chief in wisdom : hoar Lywarch  
Who winnowed purpose from the husk of words  
And moved in safety, or so stood, prepared  
In watch and arms : the ruddy Cynon—fierce  
To charge, pursue and slay : and dark Aron  
Matured in guile for backward march, when'er  
The storms and lightnings of his charge had failed  
To foil the pagan. All concurred : from heart  
And hard advisings, answer there was one,  
None other—and one name—none other choice :  
Answer and name were—Tristram. Thereupon,  
Arthur a loving treaty made with Mark,  
Arch-villain-royal. And, since by Table Round  
Tristram won safety in his Logrian home,  
So now, its will, clothed with word paramount—  
The Dragon King's—his Lion-knight was called  
To Camelot, with lady of his heart,  
La Belle Isonde.

“ News-bringer, friend ! ” quoth he,  
“ Ruin rings in thy voice : yet, we shall go :  
Soon be in readiness.” With coldness spake  
Sir Tristram, but a tear in either eye,  
More truly than nine prayers at nocturns thrice  
Repeated, told, within his soul, the deeps  
Of sorrow opened. “ How my spirits yearn  
For Palomide, Knight of the Faith. Methinks,  
His great renunciation and his quest  
Were good for me : his new-tuned voice, perchance,  
Might comfort me. But, friend, I take my barge  
For yonder fane, whose worship, oftentimes,  
More rapture hath bestowed than may belong  
To earth’s delight : my spear has done its last  
War-service, and those holy hours demand  
The dedication of what best hath served  
The wantonness of valour. O, good spear !  
I may not reckon our companionship

In field, by wayside, midst the hosts, alone,  
In tumult of the lists : the past is woe  
To measure : but the future hath its hope.  
On the high-altar, placed by priestly hands,  
We separate, seeking peace by diverse ways.  
On my return.—But Brengwain, tend our lady.  
Nay, best beloved, loosen thine arms : two hours,  
And I am here again, a truer knight  
Than thou hast found me yet. Nay, thou, Isonde,  
Angel that ever sanctified my strength—  
In this contention of thy passion, be  
Thy better self. Forsake me not. Again,  
My mission is but thine. Sustain her, friends,  
On my short absence.”

Looking in her eyes

He saw Love's day-star darkening. “ Now, with speed,  
For my last rites at Joyous Gard.” His lance,



By this, was in his hand. Failing in voice,  
Isonde, with silent signal to her grooms,  
Waved their attendance. Tristram saw the sign.  
“ Bring me my harp ! ” he cried. “ Naught more my  
need.”

His barge unmoored ; within the stem was laid  
His battle-spear, ere this enwreathed with flowers  
As it had budded, blossomed with a growth  
Sweeter than any summer, when it lived,  
And birds had hiding in its leaves, amidst  
The groves of Ferniehurst. Close by the helm  
He sate and strook his harp : the barge moved off :  
Thridding the verdant islets towards the fane  
Where surpliced priests were waiting. Here, with  
prayers  
He brought his lance, and with it spoils of war,  
Jewels and wedge of gold. Then, to the Gard

---

As music-drawn, his boat sped swiftly back,  
Whilst Tristram strook his harp—the sharp-cut wave  
Singing beneath her prow to hear his song.

Belle Isonde, when her lord approached, restored  
From that heart-faintness which attends the smart  
Of unexpected trouble, had woven her hair  
In fine new fancies, one broad plait around  
Her argent brow, whereon composure slept,  
Whilst o'er her face a pensive smile, as light  
On moving water, came and went ; not glad,  
But grateful, and in golden patience held  
To undergo what must be. No less he ;  
Sustained by spiritual solace from the lips  
Of holy pastors lately left. None word,  
Of fear, or doubt, sad child, spake Tristram, none ;  
But solemn-sweet his voice : “ Heart's queen ! Mine  
own !

We go from Joyous Gard. My spear has turned  
From noise and stroke of war : by priestly hand  
Received, 'neath yonder fañe it lies, shall lie,  
In consecrated peace : henceforth, my sword  
Suffices for my travails, and my harp  
Conjoined for praise. The bedesman, we away  
On all our mornings lighted by this sun,  
Across these waters of the Joyous Gard,  
Will sound his orisons for our twain souls  
To keep the peace begotten here, till peace  
Heavenliest strikes through the nights of death. My  
heart !

The stream of earthly happiness, which glides  
With never-ending curves, from us departs  
Surely—but none less sure, its waters flow ;  
Whereon, let us have heart's content and cheer.  
Their shining feet are hurrying shining hours,  
Surely, to lovers everywhere. Our love,

---

Our own,—sufficient solace that for us :  
Since none hath given, no one can take away ;  
And in its strength divine let us remain  
Submissive : trusting in the God of Love,  
Abide His will.”

Within the dark they sped  
Which followed that same day. Morn's windy light  
Rose on them far beyond the hills. Their throngs  
Of dame and knight were grieved they could not hail  
Once, if for ever, dazzling in the dawn  
All diamond and gold, the Joyous Keep,  
And, green from shore to hills, and silver-laced  
With ringing becks, Love's principality.  
But they not long forlorn—so soon the sun  
Breathed warmly on their way, and woke the flowers.  
Love's-liking takes to flowers : these, be at once  
Colour, remembrance, and a music heard

Within the spirit, melodies more sweet  
Than voice or instrument : thus, hills and seas  
Unseen upon their travel, faithful flowers  
Attended, in their shining ministries ;  
By road and leafy copse, by dales and fells,  
The month known by their blazonries—as told  
Daffodils spreading sunshine by the brooks—  
That air from lily-o'-the-valley's bells,  
Within their early summer shrines of green  
All silver-hung, blown wide abroad—nor less,  
By golden salvers of marsh-marigold  
Prepared for elfin tribes, high feast and dance  
Now near with genial airs—these, kept the life  
Of Joyous Gard still rich in every heart  
By all their travels.

Arthur, still in north,  
Received them in Carduel's palace-hall,

With royal, simple courteousness. His throne  
Stood empty : central on the floor, rush-clad,  
On velvet carpet placed the golden chair  
Wherein sate Arthur : with him, Table Round—  
Scant in its company—and courtly suite  
Reclined on cushions, those of saffron-hue  
These, bloom of rose—when all with voice to each  
Of Joyous Gard's fresh-exiled lovers here,  
“ Welcome of heaven to thee ! ”

A jocund week,  
With joust for morning, sports and minstrelsy  
From noon till midnight, nocturns then forgot,  
Matins displaced by madrigals, till noon  
Was hot again on their carousals,—aye,  
Mad merriment, as when midsummer's sun  
Keeps all the heavens from 'night—and not as though  
The sun of Love, midst shades, now made descent

Into life's winter. Yet, one might have seen,  
That to Isonde or Tristram, none the sports  
Made of their happiness : that oft the light,  
Which tells the soul, went out from Tristram's face :  
And that within her eyes, new-queened Isonde,  
For Love's bright day-spring, or the full of noon,  
Its evening star shone dim.

The gay time closed,  
Arthur unto his Table Round, " This while,  
A brother sorrows, prison-bound—nought less,  
In castle close-beset : and there be griefs  
More sore, of which his clouded hints portend,  
More than were kind to name. Whene'er the weak  
Beseech us in their needs, 'tis ours to learn  
How they may be upheld." Few spake thereon,  
And these, in reverence to their King, resigned  
Will and suggestion : sought for his command,

His own good-will. The issue was abrupt,  
And without words. Their King spake not: nor moved :  
His loving, large, and wondrous eyes were laid  
On Tristram : noting which, the Table Round  
Arose in silence, and in silence bowed  
Before the Dragon King : then, turning, bowed  
In silence before Tristram, as he sate  
Within his siege, so noble in his port,  
Such lofty purpose luminous in his eyes,  
He scarce seemed second to the kindly King.  
Sir Tristram, answering,—“ I have read your minds,  
Most worthy fellowship ! Our will as one,  
Hath ever been and must remain. Your will,  
My own, I follow to the end.”

Next morn,

Submissive, he at matin-song, what time  
Caerleon's prelate-lord, who ever placed



The land's sin on the Court, the doubled sin  
Of Court on King : sonorous, merciless,  
“ Thy sin shall find thee out ! ” of Homily  
His burden :—“ Keep Thy sheep from wolves ! ” of

Prayer

His burden,—Light of Christ's Church dawning then  
On Britain, he repealed the doom so dark  
O'er Cornwall's throne : Mark's bridal sacrament  
Received original powers, and Tristram's might  
Was pledged.

But not from either realm withdrawn  
The spiritual voices in their tears and prayers :  
Nor secret ministers within the hours  
Stayed in their swift fulfilment. Belle Isonde  
Brought to Tintagel's ribald towers a heart  
Void of desire for those delights of Mark  
Which filled his days, 'midst idle, sportive dames,

Knights of the drinking horn, and squires of worth  
In wantonness. With him the Lion-sword  
Brought, self-enjoined, a charge, eftsoons proclaimed,  
Accepted and pursued : four years its edge,  
As to amend its aught of wrong, should serve  
Even as King Mark might ask.

That merriest month,  
Flower-crowned, which laughed above their southward  
march,  
Died not before the warm rose-breath of June,  
Ere Tristram sped to danger-haunted fields.  
He fought ; subdued ; returned. Sent forth again,  
Again his sword, sole comrade of his quest,  
From peril's womb brought forth the babe of peace,  
Purged evil darkness till its tracks and dens  
Gave home and passage, as in lands of light  
O'erlooked by Camelot. From time to time,

Arm-wearied grown, or weak from dolorous wounds,  
Still to Tintagel he would turn. These times,  
Resting, awaiting healing of his hurt,  
His harp oft in his hand would sing the tale  
Of enterprise and hope, of late complete,  
With tones of flame and flashing melodies  
To the court's pleasure. Ah, but to the Queen,  
Raptures and pride. His valorous deeds o'er-rode  
Her loving fearfulness, now dangers gone  
And gladness prospers. But with healing, flight—  
Whither, in Mark's deranged seven-cornered realm,  
Outrage and rapine wildest: given to sleep  
The strings of music—splendours of new dawn  
Flared from his brand, upon the lawless night  
Enkindling righteousness: and, then, his harp,  
And that majestic voice of melody,  
Exulting, gave the conquest to Christ's faith,  
Never to be undone: heart-taught by him

---

Homes shone with gospel-light, and food divine  
He placed on humblest lips for daily use,  
Fair golden sentence of the Mountain set  
In silver song.

These plighted years fulfilled,  
His last return bestowed his chiefest joy  
Next to his joy in love. Swart Palomide,  
Drawn to Tintagel suddenly, as found  
Trail of the Questing Beast anear the throne,  
Met him beneath the portal, in his arms  
Bound him, with speech of praise and prophecy,—  
That, in this mission, better were performed,  
Than if seven thunders spake, the great intent  
Of chivalry—its dedicated fire,  
Impassioned heart, and sacrifice : he told,  
What meed his gracious Honour should secure,  
Then in his fame flown wide, even as the wind

Searching each quarter, and thereafter known,  
When claimed of the divine deliverer Death,  
In tongues unborn, and in the leagues of love  
First champion : and, as love begetteth love,  
His name should never fail, for hearts would burn  
To hear the purport of his life, whereon  
Love's birth would be assured—in which he erred not.

Palomide's fervency of loving speech,  
O'ercame Mark's knight, who slowly spake, held hard  
The hand that clasped his own ; gazed on the earth—  
Beginning and the end—as in his thought—  
Thus gently told : “ Dear brother-knight, my heart  
Hath its desire. Thy words have more content  
Than tourney-trophies, and the light of smiles  
From ladies when the fresh wound wins the fight.  
But, here, no more. The longing of my soul  
Shall now be satisfied. Something remains.

Unto the sun-rise limits of Mark's land  
I have made clean its ways—and now, myself,  
Blameful, unworthy, weakest child of sin,  
Heedless of faith whene'er my spear most strong ;  
Frailest in times of strength ; most foul, whene'er  
Virtuous in practice,—I must go, be cleansed,  
Renounce the way and instruments of war—  
Of which," he touched his sword, " this last remains—  
And in a fit humility acquire  
Initiation to the paths of peace."

The promise of his penitence was kept  
At Caerleon's altar. Hallowing of the sword,  
That sword whose lightnings seemed to smite more  
quick  
Than either edge, was done with crowded rites  
Of prayer, and praise, and song. Good Bedwin's hand,  
Chief priest of blessing, who had Arthur's trust

And conscience in his keeping, took the blade,  
And midst triumphant psalms, dense fragrant wreaths  
From silver censers, nine times murmured vows,  
Laid it within a shrine, where sacred light  
Fell fullest through the chancel panes, resigned  
To peace. The arch-priest's hand upraised, thereon,  
Was benediction ; soft as Hermon's dew,  
His language over the deliverer's head,  
Left Tristram consecrate to peace,—its powers,  
Benignities, its patience, hope ; his arms,  
His rest and spiritual sustenance evermore.

In this our tale, we must confess its truth,  
As speaks the heart unto itself when heard  
The sacring bell. Erring, some pens have told  
The sorrowful end of this puissant love,  
Most sorrowful at best report. From wounds,—  
Erring, they say it,—laid in Brittanie

Was Tristram in the care of Lily Hands,  
(As she outlived her lord): the maiden-wife,  
He bade forthlook upon the sea and say  
Came there from westward, any ship in sail?  
And when espied—the sail or black or white?  
If white!—wot Lily Hands—the freight she brings  
Is Belle Isonde, who comes to cure the wounds  
Defeating other skill.—The sail was white.—  
That moment's hate o'ermastered love. Isonde  
Of Lily Hands recked not the healing craft,  
Her lord's one need. As she beheld it shine,  
A star upon the sea, she cried—"A sail!  
The sail, be black!" Whereon, the knight as struck  
By treacherous glaive, groaned, and the draught of death  
Took instantly. La Belle Isonde arrived—  
They fable—when were told the news, she sank,  
And seeing her dead lover, died. Ah, well!  
In truth, we know, Isonde of Brittanie



Close by her home, kept sweetest sleep and last  
Beneath the still green billows of life's haven—  
Would we were there, sigh some—and we must speak  
By our antique report, when Launcelot spake  
As brother of Sir Tristram in his faith  
And chivalry, best knowing—and the worst  
Stricken when Tristram passed.

There came a day,  
Recognisant of Tristram—shadows lie  
Deepest upon that day—though glories gild,  
As those of love must ever do, death's dark,  
The dark of death remains. There came a day,  
Recognisant of Tristram. Cornwall's scath  
Flown from before his saviour-sword, remote,  
Sea-banished, now, unheard: his valourous deeds  
Had worship from the realm. War's iron cries  
Were tuned to festal-songs; the battle spear

Clanged in the merry tourney : found of grace,  
Sorrow put on the garments of delight  
And ruin wreathed itself in smiles and flowers :  
And foremost in the fire of revelry  
And storm of lauds, Tintagel on that day.

Proudest was Palomide. His brother-knight  
To praise, was his best glory. But, behold,  
Caerleon's consecrated sword he wears,  
Sought by his hand unconscious, when his mood  
Lost light of the day's joy. He had to speak  
To the enquiring wonder of Mark's eye,—  
“ This sword, you see, once thy arch-knight's, now mine,  
Redeemed with golden booty earned in wars  
With godless spoilers of Christ's land, best serves  
To hasten me, may best serve on my quest.”

As yet unsaid, and best unsaid ; if said,  
Then briefest.—Mordred during these last days

Came to Tintagel with adulterous news  
From Camelot, with greetings no less vile  
From temptress Vivien : unction to Mark's spirit,  
Dearest through evilness. This northern snake  
Crept into covert corners of the bowers  
Whispering the Caiaphas prophecy—"One man  
Should die for all men's good!" 'Tis said, this while,  
Arthur was chilled even at high noon ; his halls  
Were filled with bodeful murmurs—but men talk  
Of travail of the event, when the event  
Comes to the birth, and, more its marvel, more  
Certain the signs of travail. All must wot  
This whispering serpent's tale : if so, why then  
Must Palomide ! And Mark bade Mordred mark  
His sword, and spoke its tale, which stopped the hiss,  
And woke the dread. Thence, Mordred's secret eyes—  
And Mark had mirth of Mordred for his fear—  
Held to the sword, as if foreboding ill.

So works the Will Divine : the evil thought  
Near to an ending, lives : the good secure,  
Or seeming, perishes : the evil lives,  
Acts ruin far from present place or time,  
Until,—until,—the perfect end doth come,  
Whereby the Will Divine is justified.

Within the pleasaunce of La Belle Isonde,  
Eve's light found Tristram harp in hand. He sang,  
Of spirit purified, known by his theme,  
And singing softly smote the mystic strings :  
His instrument was as a second voice  
True daughter of his spirit : voice, spirit, harp,  
Were blended in exalted song. He sang ;  
In full assembly of the dames and knights,  
Sang to Isonde alone, But each ear won,  
All needs must hearken : or, in silent groups,  
Laid on the grass : or, gathered midst the trees

For silence of the shadows : or, on flowers  
With hushed and perfumed footsteps moved. Isonde,  
Though hers the lay, the ears of all being won  
They needs must hearken.—Palomide alone  
Stood solitary, dull in vision,—entranced  
Most woefully,—for, woe, when evil charm  
Flies not from music—and his battle-spear  
All unremembered, slanting 'gainst a yew,  
Within the failing light grew black. Not so,  
King Mark. Nor, as his guests beguiled : nor, still,  
Bound by a sorcerous spell, like Palomide,  
But in a neighbouring aisle obscure of elms,  
Hearing the harmonies, the furies rose  
Tormenting thought and sense : and as he paced  
Delirious, wilder still the furies raged ;  
Such force hath sweetest song on evil minds.

Before La Belle Isonde, the king's knight sang,

Sang like to one whose earthly love foregone,  
A holier hath arisen. War's perils past,  
Fled from his tongue : the present held him not,  
Nor with its loves, or glories. Now, his eye,  
Held by the evening star, his voice had ranged  
From Belle Isonde : his spirit's wing sustained  
On the still rapture of imagination  
Sailed to far times, and unto these he sang,  
Clear to his inner vision as to hope.  
" Those times all splendour-clad, and sweet, and sure  
As is yon star : that retinue, I see,  
Radiant in its approach, when with their powers  
A gentle hand shall rule : that Queenly rule,  
Odour of peace on all its functions, spreads  
A morning sweetness through these realms : that power  
Ascends to undreamed heights of glory ! " Heard  
That rising note, Mark heard no more, but heard  
A whispering as of Mordred's serpent-tongue :—

“More hath he been than King: much more, than King.  
Thrice, hath he purged my lands: thrice, kept my crown  
Firm on my forehead. Happy are my homes :  
My burghs and thorpes increase—and through his  
might.

So easy, then, for him to be the King,  
Displacing Mark—Mark, the anointed King !  
Is he, forsooth, not prophesying now  
Of his great self ? Ay, truly, let one churl  
Cry ‘ King ’ of him, and all breaths would conspire  
To puff the purple from me, and himself  
Make King ! Or she, my wife, sole sovereign Queen,  
Make her, awhile, till he soon found to be  
Sole King !—And I, King Mark, think thus !—And one  
Needs die ! And I think thus !” Blind, murder-drunk,  
Cornwall, from out the darkened aisle of elms,  
Reeled : stretched his arms abroad, as if to find  
Support in failing strength, and seeking, grasped

The spear of Palomide. A crimson light  
Broke o'er Mark's maddened brain ; and as his thought  
He heard and saw—no more—that instant fell  
Tristram, the Light of Honour, by the king  
Spear-stricken through the heart.

La Belle Isonde

Beheld that face—which as the morning shone—  
Bloodless and disinherited of light :  
Those clear, large eyes—whose purest life was drawn  
Ever from her, and were to her as life—  
Dead-staring at the sky. Nor on the king  
She looked, nor any dame, nor any knight,  
But from her height of life and joy at once  
Sank into the irrevocable dark.  
The starless night possessed those eyes of love—  
And stooping, sinking, gently, like to one  
Grown suddenly weary, silently her lips



Partook from his the sacrament of death.  
As all must die, the question is—how best  
It were to die?—Methinks, hers no ill speed.

Above all mourners, one, that other heart  
Of Tristram in his chivalry, was struck  
Once and for ever—Launcelot. Not for him  
The sparkling sorrow, and its cloud is gone.  
Death to his spirit's valiance was the news,  
To every hope the night of death, a night  
Without a morning. And unchanged, or changed  
To finer knightly true-love in his heart,  
This season of his woe unto the last.  
The voices and the silences which haunt  
Man's closing years, now with him, left him not,  
Immediate, dread companions of his time  
Till time was none for him. His trembling heart  
Shook paradise from Joyous Gard, those months

He sought our lovers' joys with Guinevere,  
The swerving Queen. Sir Tristram's way of love,  
Was twin unto his own ; he might not gain,  
Nor did he gain the rarer ecstasies,  
But his to walk the self-same road, and end  
In rarer bitterness. His silent pain,  
Showed outward to his fellowship how keen  
Its edge. His majesty was dimmed—the form,  
The power, and the informing soul—though long  
Puissance of his nobleness maintained  
Within his voice. He asked, and Arthur gave,  
His choicest troop of barons, harnessed black,  
With black recognisances, helm and shield,  
For honour of the burial ; as required,  
So gave the Dragon King. But Mark was known  
Unchastened by remorse. Acquainted naught  
With knightly temper, he the peaceful dead  
Held stronger in his hate : a hardened soul

Unto its own perdition Mark's, nor feared  
Launcelot's dismay, nor sorrowing wrath of those  
Within his own Tintagel. Mark deferred  
The natural obsequies. Let them be named—  
And the cold, contumelious sneer replied  
In language of his heart : he fain had laid  
Their bodies within ground unconsecrate :  
Naught, in his wild despite by word or deed,  
Too baleful in effect. When Launcelet asked  
He might attend death's fitting rites, and praised  
The dead, Mark's wan lips twitched. " Like as they  
    played,  
Play you with fancies in thy love. By tale,  
Your flattering thoughts, which please yourselves, I know ;  
Fine loves, I know them well. Now, barter these—  
' Love's foliage in the hyacinth tress ; its rose  
' Upon the cheek, and violet in the eye ! '  
Love's passion-flowers like these, pray, barter me

For boorish truth. I have a chosen love  
Which clips, and hurts, and cries with pain's delight  
Plain, lusty love is mine. Yet, in thy phrase,  
Take these death's lilies, and their virtuous dust  
Through which the worm glides noiseless—his high feast  
Asks for no minstrel-jangle, for his grace  
The abbot's lips are mouldering 'neath the shroud,  
And wassail waits him in the warrior's heart  
Whose wonted throbs, the thunders of the tilt  
Once answered—to the royal worm yield these  
Thy lovers with all proper pomp." The knight,  
Palsied by shame, so near his hallowed dead,  
His not the hand to slay the crowned shame.  
Silent, some seconds' space : wherein, his mind  
Weighed this dark hate of Mark, and therefrom drew  
A purpose late beyond his hope. " Fair king,  
My love is apt to parley with thy hurt.  
Say, in thy graciousness, with these my knights,

May I provide a burial for the twain  
Beyond Tintagel's bounds ?" Sharp, hissing came  
With curl o' the lip this answer. "Ay, my halls  
Are purer for that speech. But, speedily.  
The charnel vapours reached my bower this morn :  
Let them not taint the merry morrow here."  
And turning sharp on heel, that was the last  
Amazed Sir Launcelot saw of Mark, or Mark  
Spake of his bright Queen dead, and Tristram dead.

A weeping haste of preparation lacked  
Help of Tintagel's court, loth to offend  
The tarnished crown they loathed ; but, more of strange,  
Lacked help of Palomide. He paced the bowers  
Astonied, as it seemed : dull in his sense  
To all the current trouble ; yet, alert,  
Listening half-bent, his head aside, to hear  
Of footsteps, as with Clustfain's ear which heard

The dew-drop falling from the grass in June  
Throughout the region of high summer's reign ;  
Listening, as for a sound within a sound,  
A spirit listening, in foot-steps to hear  
The spirit-step, as of the thing itself.

And when the sun in large cloud-glories robed  
Descended for his rest in ocean's halls,  
Out from Tintagel, with funereal hymns,  
And pageant clad in sable samite, went,  
To seek their rest, the still forms of Isonde  
And Tristram, on the bier ; as in their lives  
Nearest and best beloved, in white of death  
Upon one bier.

Across the eastward plain  
The pageant, with its pace of woe and tears  
Wound slowly. Mark upon his topmost tower  
Beholding, regal-robed and diademed—

A sight of horror—hate within the sun—  
Glory within its glories, passion-struck,  
In the mid-tempest of his mood, his face  
Worked fiercely, with a pall of crimson glooms—  
His face and flickering splendour of his robes  
Wore horrors of the radiance of hell :  
But paled that face, one moment, ere he lost  
These lovers, until passion in his soul  
Rose higher, the pageant nearing Cadon's woods :  
Now, reached ; now, entered ; and now, hid—and, then,  
The hate found voice. “For Vivien, now, my soul !  
For Vivien !” Last words these for him. A cry  
Behind, “ Whelp of the Questing Beast !” One flash,  
White-circling, and the royal miscreant head,  
And bulk of frame into the stagnant fosse  
Fell heavily. A sable form erect,  
With eyes of fire, stood in the place of Mark.  
Lifting on high a dripping sword, it waved—

Caerleon's consecrated sword it was  
That waved adieus towards the hidden train  
Winding through Cadon's groves. All night was heard  
In Isonde's bower a piteous, pleading cry,  
Broken with shriek for Mordred. But, as doom  
Expected least had come, the doom most feared  
Escaped. Sleuth-hound of empire, Mordred, sped  
Those hours to Camelot.

With rising morn,  
Rode forth a knight distraught, on whom no man  
Dared lay his hands. A furlong from the keep,  
He sharp drew rein, turned in his selle, upraised  
His mailed fist and cried : " I've slain the whelp !  
Now for the sire ! " Then, frenzied Palomide,  
With haste of hope, dashed on his Perilous Quest.



for Ted  
a/c 1/10

